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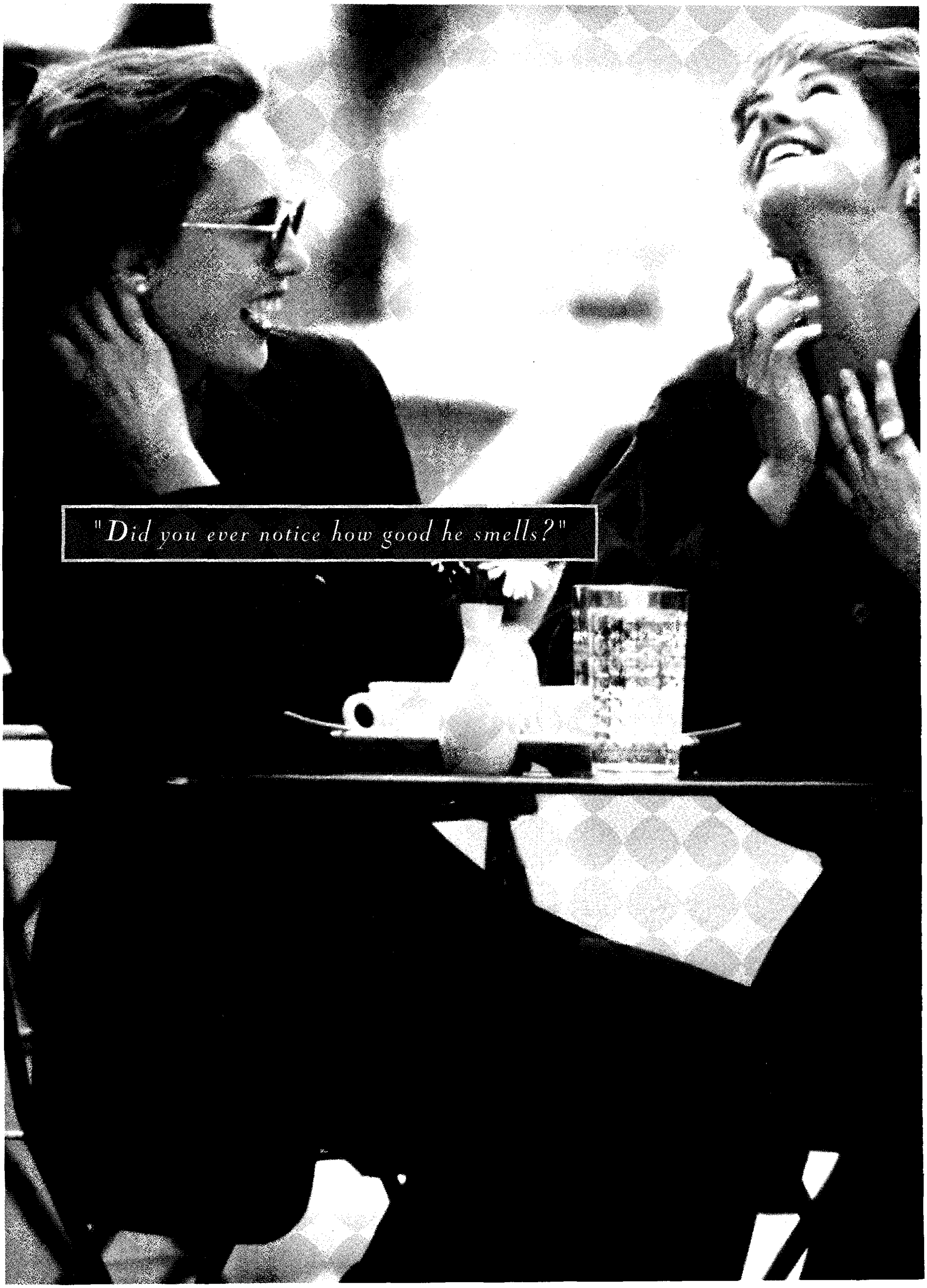
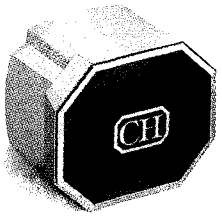

"Did you ever notice how good he smells?"



GEORGIA: *I finally went out to dinner with him last night.*

JACKIE: *Just the two of you? Where did you go?*

GEORGIA: *Mario's.*

JACKIE: *Mario's? The food is terrible.*

GEORGIA: *I didn't notice. I don't really even know what I ate.*

JACKIE: *Really?*

GEORGIA: *You should have seen him. He was so sweet. He spilled his wine all over my dress.*

JACKIE: *Adorable.*

GEORGIA: *And then when he reached over to give me his napkin, he knocked over his water glass.*

JACKIE: *Hilarious.*

GEORGIA: *Well, it was. We couldn't stop laughing. We just had to get out of there. We laughed all the way back to my place.*

JACKIE: *Your place?*

GEORGIA: *Well, I was soaked. And besides...*

JACKIE: *Besides.*

GEORGIA: *Did you ever notice how good he smells?*

JACKIE: *Frankly, no.*

GEORGIA: *He wears the most wonderful cologne.*

JACKIE: *Dare I ask what it is?*

GEORGIA: *Well, it comes in a box with dots.*

JACKIE: *Dots?*

GEORGIA: *Dots.*

JACKIE: *So. Now we're back at your place...*

GEORGIA: *Jackie, how's your mother?*

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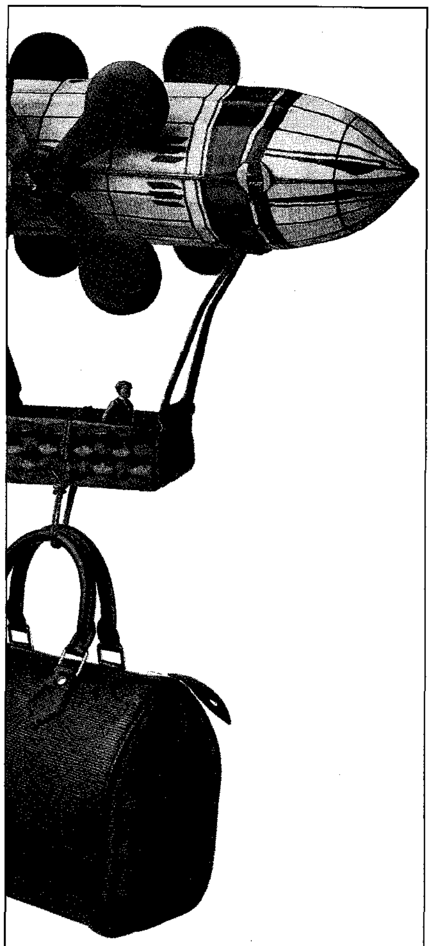

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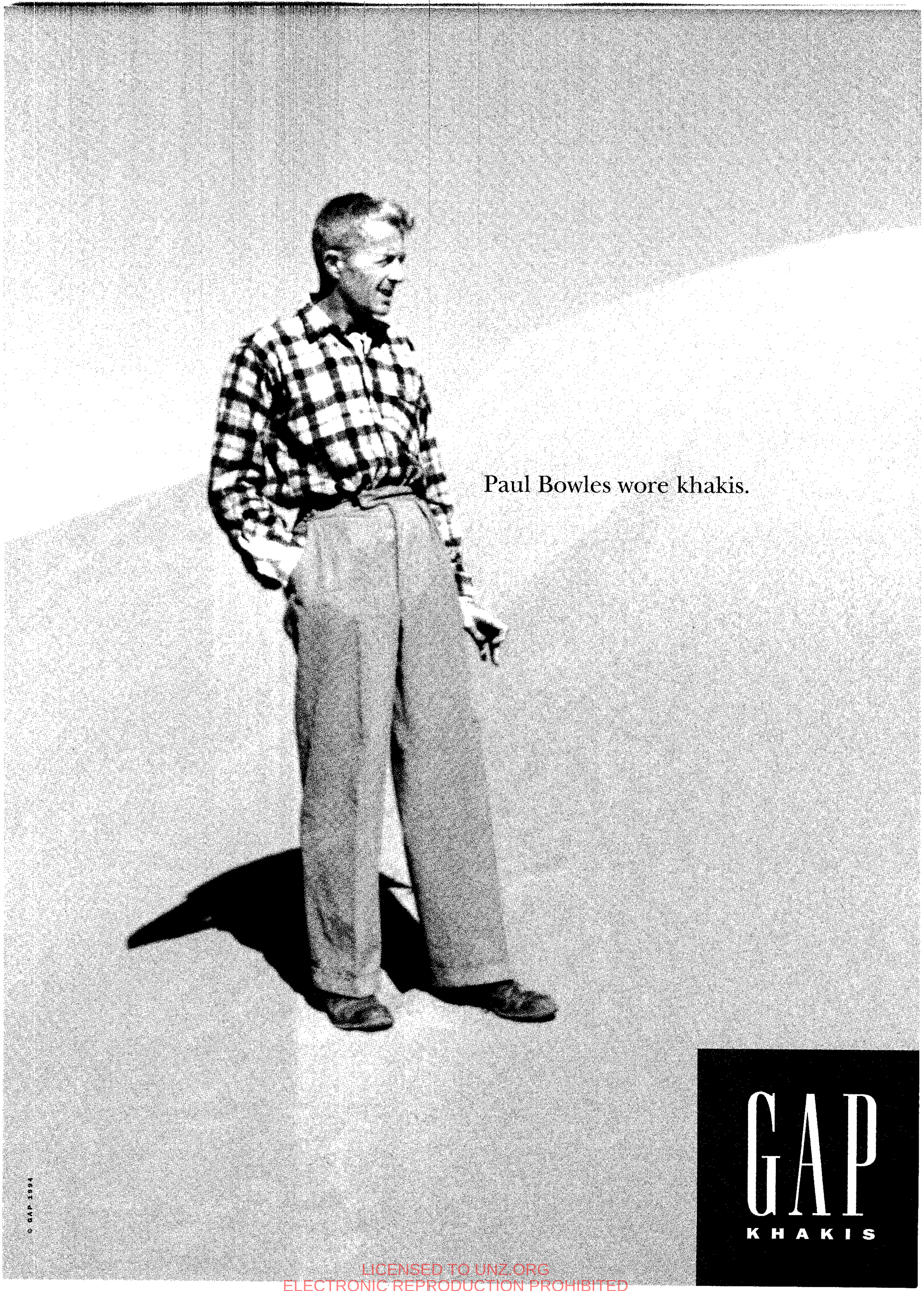
Paul Bowles wore khakis.
GAP
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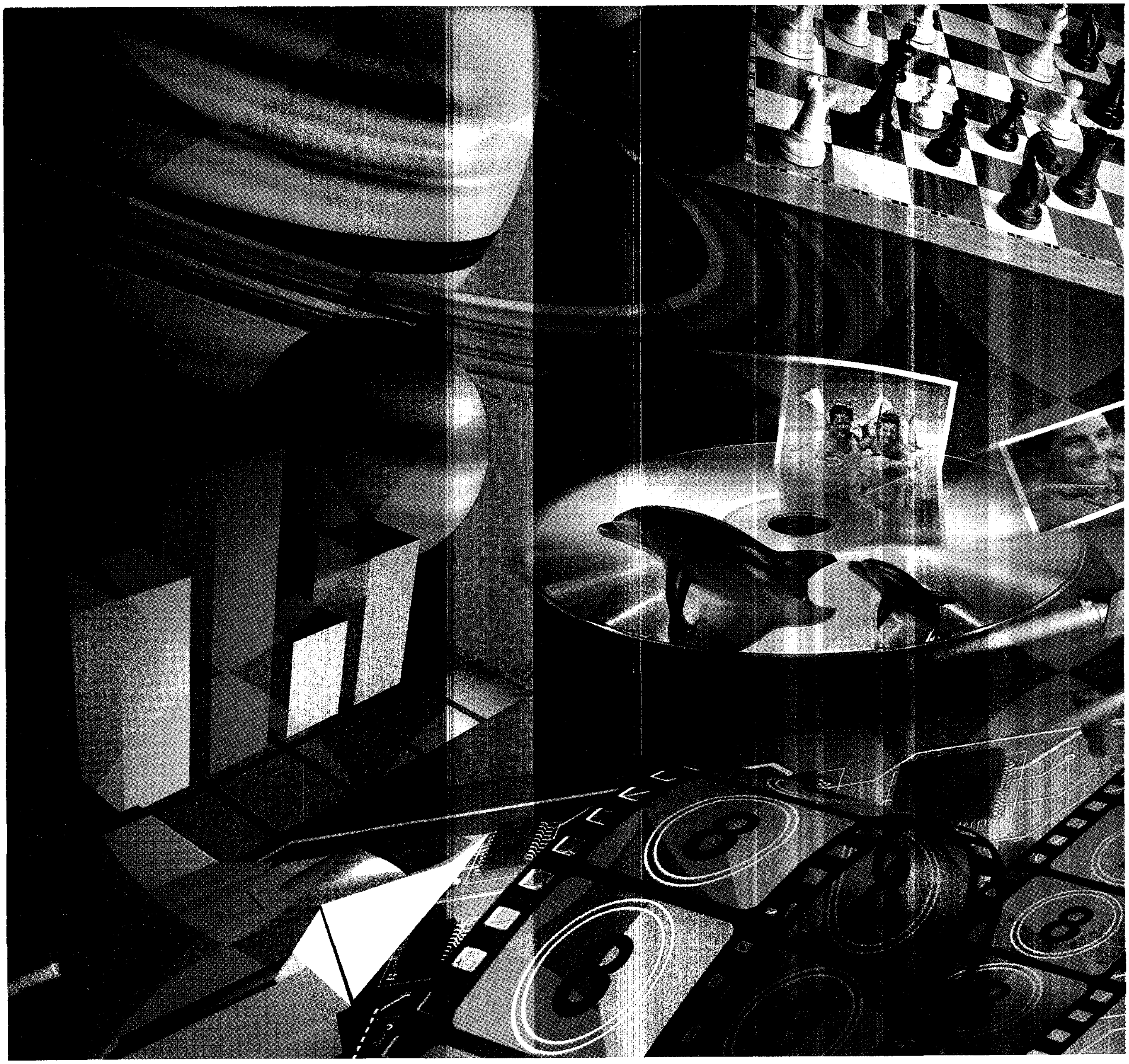

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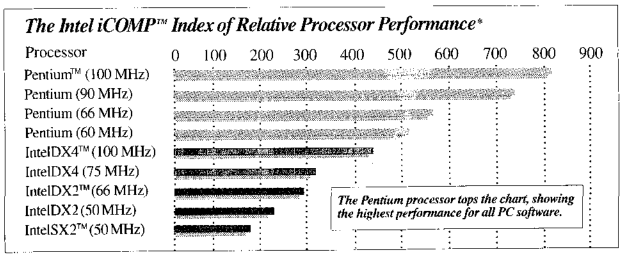

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COMMENT

PERILOUS FIGHT

Haiti's problems will not yield as easily as its Army.

You can do anything with a bayonet, Napoleon is said to have observed, except sit on it. Arms, however overwhelming, offer no substitute for politics—a lesson the Emperor might have drawn from his most humiliating defeat, in the colony of Saint-Domingue. There, a ragtag army of rebellious slaves annihilated fifty-five thousand of France's finest troops. In 1804, the slaves, exultant in victory, restored their country's Indian name: Haiti.

Napoleon had sought to impose a military solution on what was clearly a political problem. He was followed, a century later, by Woodrow Wilson, who sent the United States Marines to occupy Haiti; nineteen years passed before Franklin Roosevelt finally pulled them out. Their departure was far from triumphant: having come to "promote democracy" and "professionalize the Army," the Americans had succeeded in doing neither; the Army they left behind is the Army that President Clinton now confronts. It is unlikely that, this time around, thousands of Americans will perish in Haiti, or that the soldiers will stay for decades as occupiers. But Haiti's crisis remains a deeply political one, extending far back into the past, and the Clinton Administration offers few signs that it knows how to resolve it.

The current stage of Haiti's chronic political crisis began in 1986, with the fall of Jean-Claude Duvalier, the scion of a thirty-year dictatorship. The Reagan Administration was quick to welcome (in Secretary of State George Shultz's words) Haiti's "development of democratic government." During the eight years since, Haiti has endured seven rulers, six coups d'état, and several (mostly bloody) attempts to hold free elections—of which but one, thanks to the copious help of the international community, succeeded. The product of that election, Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, had served barely seven months of his five-year term when, in September of 1991, the military overthrew him.

The causes of this doleful history go well beyond a handful of "dictators" in military uniforms. Nor can Father Ari-

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stide's ouster be explained as the product of some metaphysical upwelling of evil. It was a political event, with political roots.

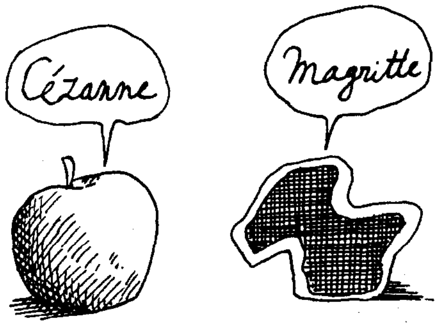
Aristide had become the leader of an immense, protean mass movement that since the early eighties had been struggling—now by revolution, now by election—to seize power from Haiti's longtime rulers. Though two Haitians in three cast their ballots for Father Aristide, those who wielded power in the society were nearly all among the other third. They included not only the predominantly light-skinned élite but also the élite's key ally in the ruling coalition: the country's black middle class, whose members dominate Haiti's bureaucracy and its Army. Had Aristide been carried into office in a revolution, those traditional powers would have been swept away. But they remained, and the new President's most formidable challenge was to devise a means of ruling the country with fragile levers of power that he held only tenuously in his hands.

Surmounting that challenge would have required a political magician, and Aristide, for all his talents, proved to be less than that. As his enemies blocked his initiatives in any way they could—through the parliament, through the bureaucracy, through the Army—he relied increasingly on his supporters in the streets, thereby redoubling his enemies' fears and sealing their determination to be rid of him. When the Army moved to overthrow him, almost the entire political class supported the coup.

Since then, Haiti's political divisions have grown deeper than ever. American policy, meanwhile, has borne little resemblance to President Clinton's version of a consistent, bipartisan effort to "restore democratic government in Haiti." President Bush applied sanctions that were almost laughably ineffective; the stark division between his rhetoric and his actions can have only strengthened the Haitian rulers' skepticism about the true goals of American policy—a skepticism that Mr. Clinton managed to reaffirm even before his Inauguration by discarding his vow to reverse the Bush policy of interdicting Haitian refugees at sea. In keeping with his decision to go on forcibly returning Haitian boat people to the country they had fled, the Clinton Administration, for its first fifteen months in office, persistently rejected the notion that the Haitian regime systematically violated its people's human rights.

The Administration's current policy dates back scarcely four months—to last May, when the President, largely in response to pressure from the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, issued an ultimatum to the regime in Port-au-Prince. Thus began a policy of bluff: the United States would prepare for an invasion in the hope that the Haitian officers would flinch and thereby make an invasion unnecessary. If the officers refused to leave, Mr. Clinton would then be obliged to choose between beating a humiliating retreat and invading to force them out. Whether he realized it or not, his decision was made in May. After that, only the Haitians had the freedom to alter what was to come.

If the Haitian military was offered the central role in this peculiar drama, the Congress and people of the United States were offered no role at all. Up until the last few days, the Administration, struggling to keep its many other commitments—on trade, on crime, on health care—chose not to expend any of its meagre supply of political capital on what it considered a marginal issue. The result is that, as Mr. Clinton prepares to send Americans into combat for the first time in his Presidency, he does so with scant public support and no congressional mandate. In their place, last Thursday evening, he offered assurances: "the mission is achievable and limited," involving only a "transfer back to democracy." But in Haiti there is no real democracy to "transfer back" to: Haiti has no established political parties, no independent judiciary, no tradition of nonviolent opposition. It has only a popular movement that will now be saddled, in a fiercely nationalistic country, with the burden of American sponsorship; an exiled and deeply controversial President; and a collection of entrenched political actors still determined to fight him. It is unclear what "nation-building" actually is, or how it might work; but it seems inarguable that if any country was ever in need of such a thing it is Haiti. Yet Mr. Clinton was at pains to insist that "our soldiers will not be involved in rebuilding Haiti or its economy."



Ever since Somalia, nation-building has been a dirty word in discussions of American foreign policy. And yet the similarity to the way the Somalia operation unfolded is almost haunting. An American President sends troops into a failed state, maintaining all the while that the problems to be confronted are limited. (In Somalia, it was famine; the clan warfare that had caused the famine went almost unmentioned.) The troops, the President announces, can be withdrawn within months, and then the entire matter will be handed over to the United Nations. The President makes no effort to secure the endorsement of Congress or to propose steps that might offer some chance of confronting the deeper problems of the country in question.

Of course, it was Mr. Bush who bequeathed to Mr. Clinton not only the intervention in Somalia but the accompanying philosophical vacuum of how to think about America's role in the post-Cold War world. Mr. Clinton has offered no Clinton Doctrine to fill it; perhaps such ideological clarity is no longer possible. But more useful than the formulation of any doctrine would be a willingness to explain and to educate, to talk frankly about history and about politics, and to create an informed citizenry, ready to consider America's behavior in the world not as an unwelcome distraction but as a matter of moral and political responsibility.

This Mr. Clinton has not yet begun to do, preferring to hope that, once having preserved America's "credibility," he can extract the troops and leave Haiti in a marginally bettered state. His impulse to free the Haitian people from what he rightly called "the most violent regime in our hemisphere" is unexceptionable. But it cannot have escaped his notice that on the very day he addressed the nation concerning an imminent invasion of Haiti the last handful of Marines straggled back from the failed mission to Somalia. Amid all the hubbub over Haiti, the troops came unhailed, almost forgotten; they had left behind a still chaotic country and forty-four dead, but few of their countrymen seemed even to notice their return.

—MARK DANNER

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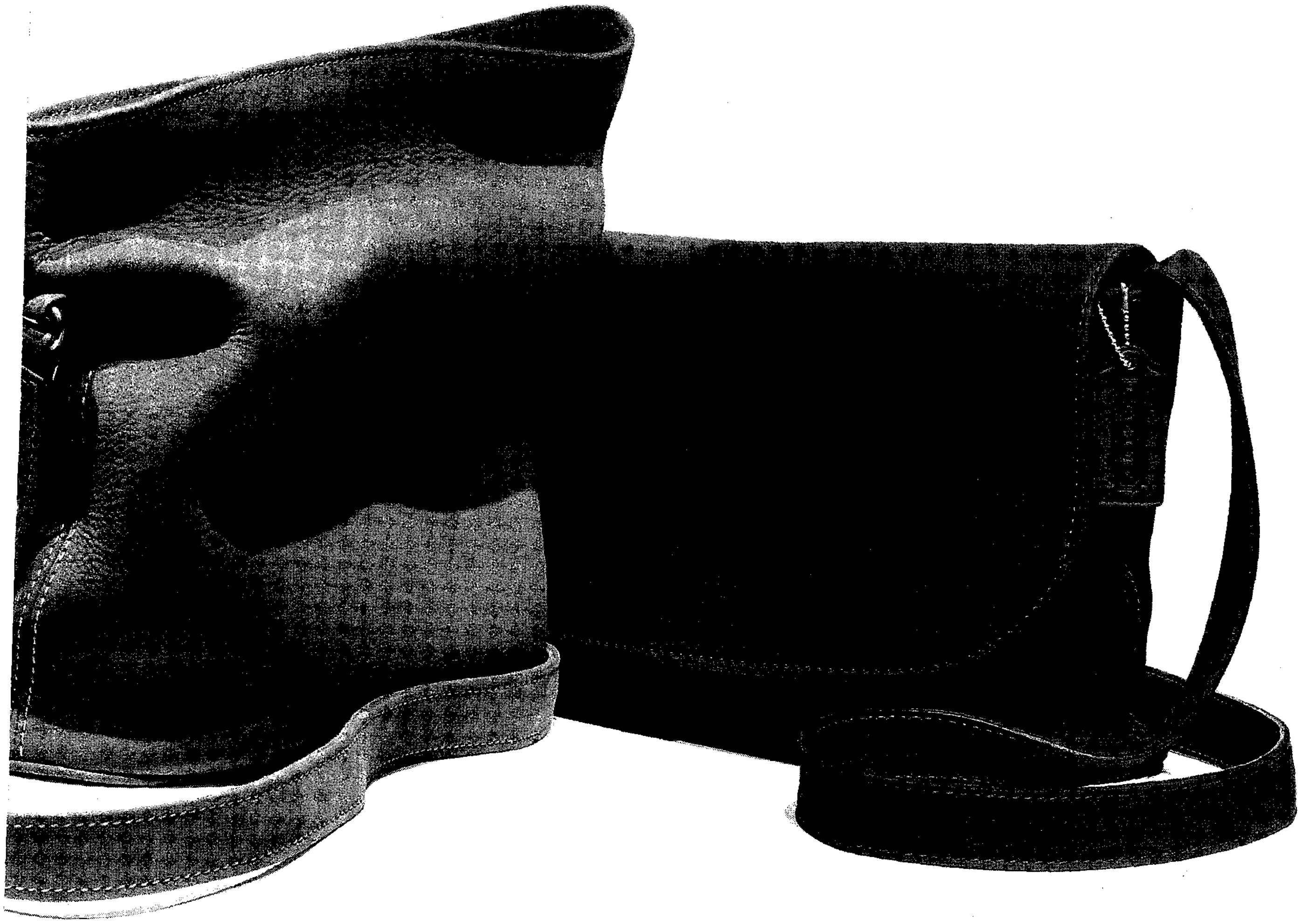

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IN THE MAIL

ROOSEVELTS REMEMBERED

As I read Doris Kearns Goodwin's article on Eleanor Roosevelt ("The Home Front," August 15th), I remembered Mrs. Roosevelt's visit to a conference at the University of Colorado in Boulder in the mid-fifties. I was on the conference's student committee, and had the honor of walking Mrs. Roosevelt from a conference session to her granddaughter's sorority house, so that she could rest before a dinner in her honor. As we walked across the campus, I responded to her queries about my course work and other activities, but I was completely unready for her last question: "Mr. Blumberg, do you think that one of my formal gowns is required for the dinner tonight, or could I wear one of my more comfortable dresses?"

Morrie Blumberg
Albuquerque, N.M.

Ms. Goodwin's article brought back firsthand memories of President Roosevelt in Oran, Algeria, in 1943. One afternoon, three battalions of troops were told to get ready to stand in a huge parade. We practiced for an hour or so in the tremendously hot African sun in our heavy woollen suits, with dust rising all around us, and then stood at parade rest holding our rifles for nearly an hour, until a Jeep suddenly appeared in the far distance. A general at the head of the vast assembly yelled "Attention!" and there we stood, hot, sweaty, and disgusted, when the Jeep stopped and the personage in it asked how long we troops had been standing at attention. After he was told, the general gave a command for us to unbuckle our collars, loosen our ties, and relax as best we could. This order came from President Roosevelt, and I can assure you that every soldier there gave a sigh of relief. I, for one, said, "God bless our President" for realizing the position all of us were in.

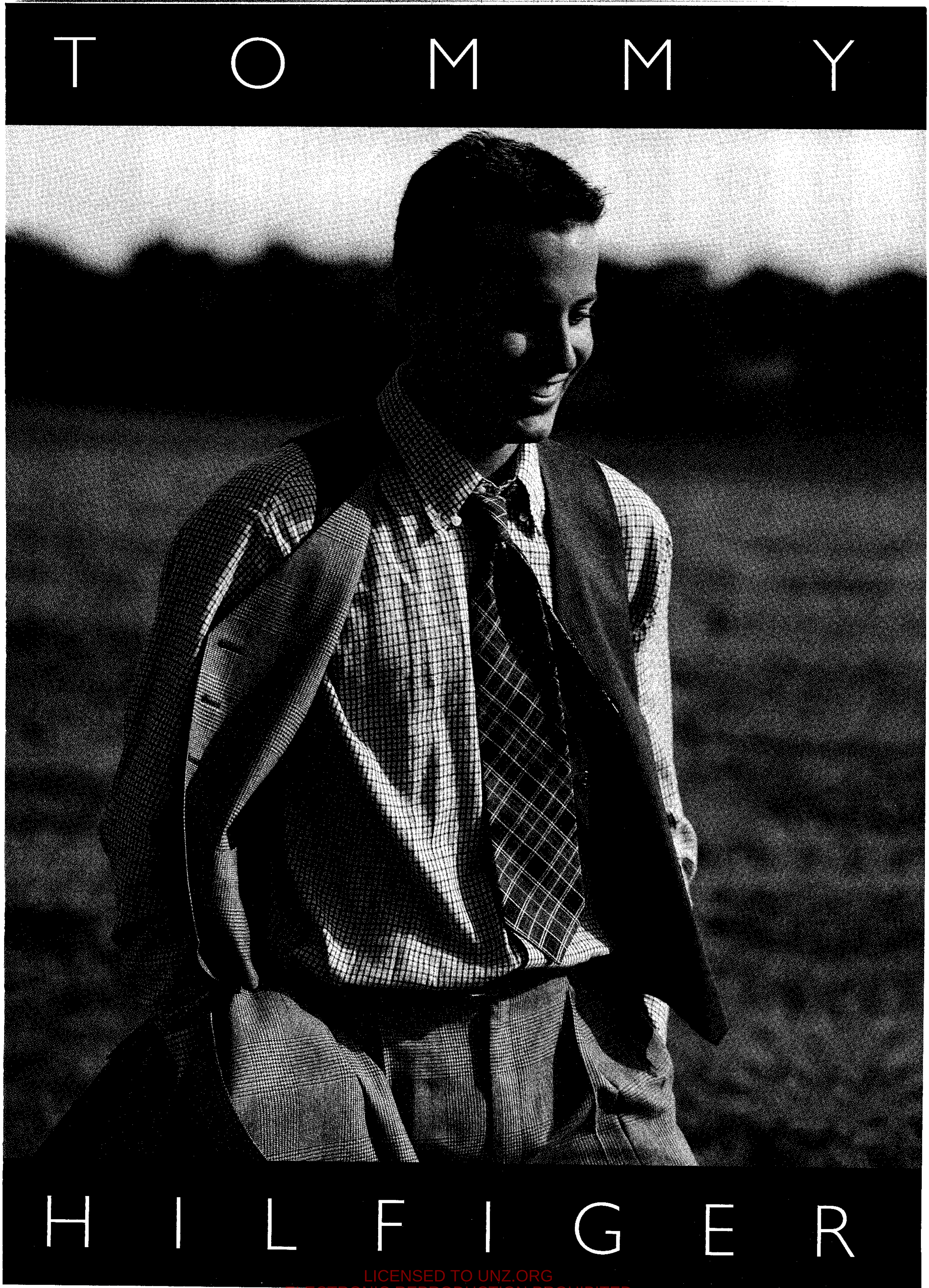
Al V. Cerino
Belleville, N.J.

It's lunchtime on Cape Cod and I'm outside reading Ms. Goodwin's article. I smile as I read of the burgeoning friendship between Lorena Hickok and Eleanor Roosevelt: two bruised individuals coming together and finding solace and comfort in their love. The idea moves me, and not least because I read their attraction as lesbian. But Ms. Goodwin banishes the thought of lesbianism without even using the word. Hickok and Roosevelt may or may not have considered their relationship lesbian, but surely there is a *possibility* that they had a lesbian relationship. Just as heterosexuals emulate heroes and heroines, so gay people need mentors from the past. Owing to the dearth of unequivocal primary sources, we often have to settle for the possibility of a historical relationship that parallels our own. Denying that possibility does us a disservice.

Mark A. Thompson
North Falmouth, Mass.

Ms. Goodwin's excellent article made me realize that we children of the Roosevelt generation saw ourselves essentially as willing vassals in the service of a country where, under the benign leadership of King Franklin and Queen Eleanor, all evils might be conquered, including unemployment, polio, and Hitler. When news reached me that F.D.R. had died, my twenty-year-old mind asked, "How will we be able to finish the war?"

On the other hand, the equally excel-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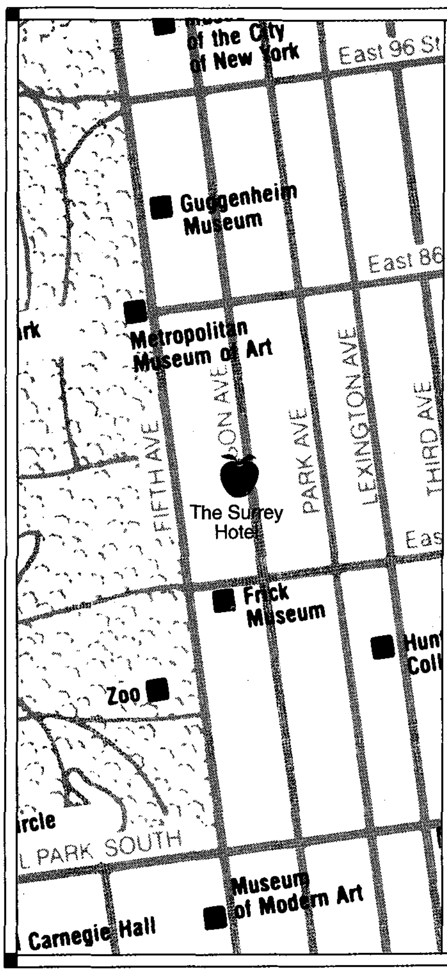

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lent piece on Woodstock by Hal Espen in the same issue (A Critic at Large) reminded me that for a large percentage of the Woodstock generation nothing that interested them seemed possible. Far from feeling like loyal peasantry off on any sort of crusade, they saw themselves as unwilling cannon fodder, and felt that, following the murder of their king and the departure of their queen, they had been left to the mercy of evil princes such as J. Edgar Hoover and his sneering allies on the draft board.

FRANK L. WARREN
Santa Barbara, Calif.

A CLEAN BILL

In his article "Colombian Gold" (Annals of Justice, August 15th), Fredric Dannen incorrectly describes the relationship between the Vigo Remittance Corporation and eight people who were arrested for money laundering as a result of a federal undercover operation in New York. The people who were arrested were not "managers" of "branches" of the Vigo Remittance Corporation. No officer, director, or employee of the Vigo Remittance Corporation has been accused of, charged with, or arrested for violating federal money-laundering laws. The people who were arrested were independent contractors through whom the Vigo Remittance Corporation—like other money transmitters such as American Express and Western Union—conducted its business. The Vigo Remittance Corporation is not responsible for alleged unlawfulness on the part of independent contractors who use its wire facilities. Moreover, in the light of the recent events, the Vigo Remittance Corporation, which has always imposed on its employees and agents restrictions that exceed the requirements of federal money-laundering laws, is imposing even tighter restrictions on the agents who use its facilities.

STEVEN C. TABACKMAN
PIERRE F.V. MERLE
Counsel to the Vigo Remittance Corporation
Washington, D.C.

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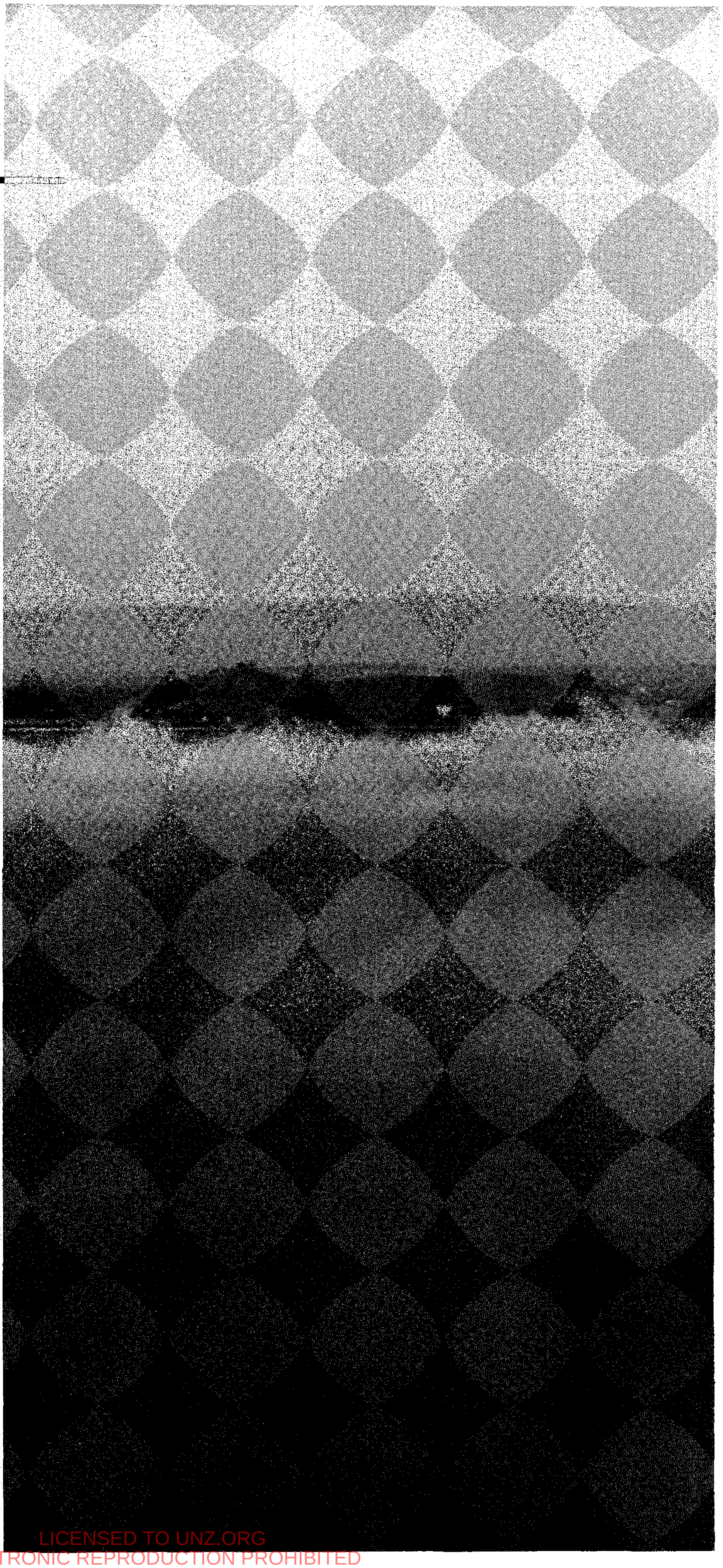

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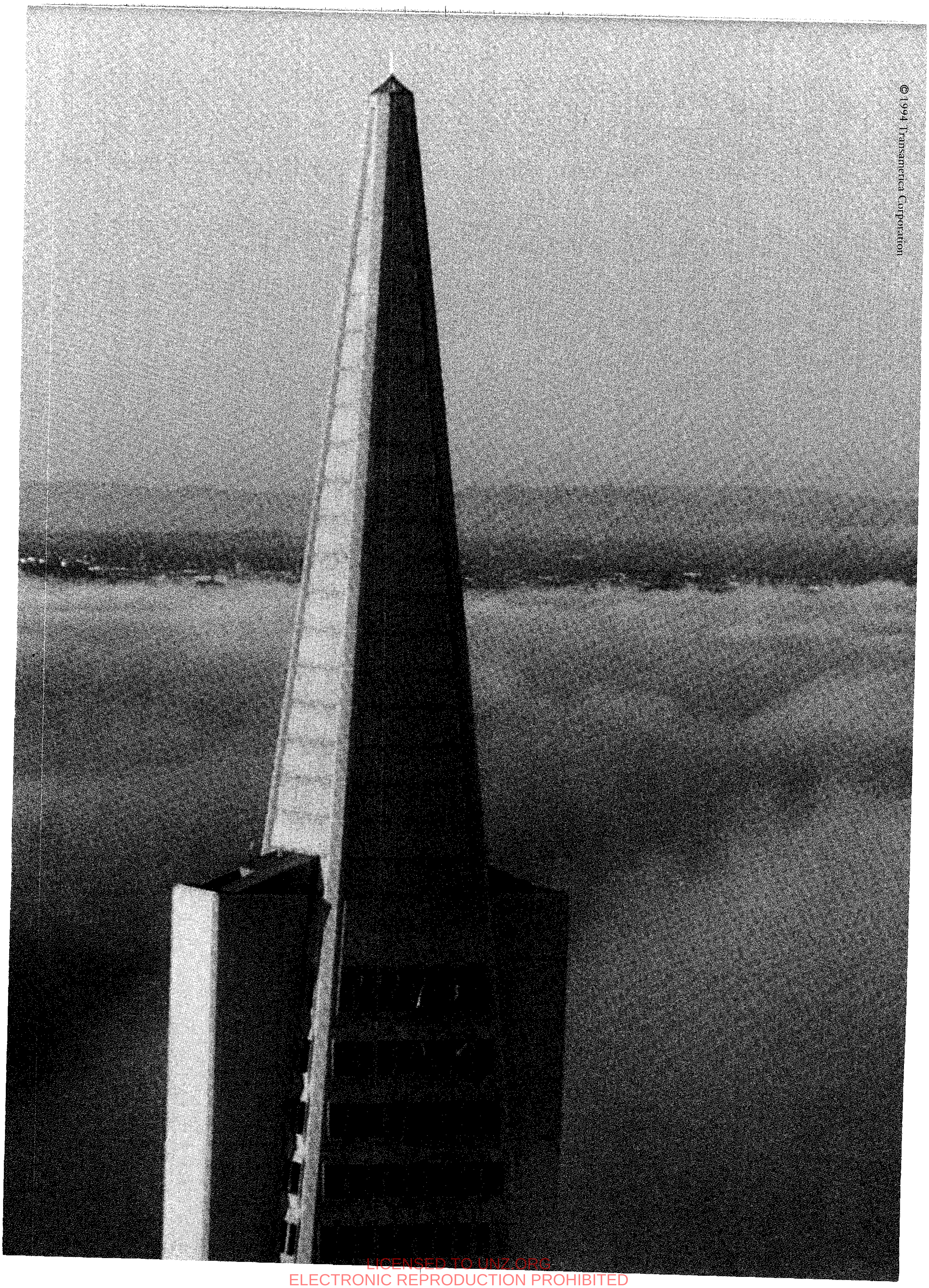

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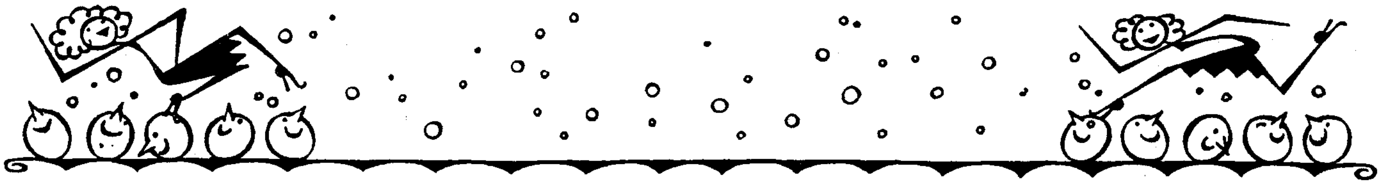

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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25	26	27				

THE THEATRE

Women at Work

The art of the slow burn hasn't been the same since Jack Benny hung up his violin, but if it ever makes a comeback Lisa Kron will be one of the reasons. Not for her the caffeine jolt that gives other downtown comedians—Reno, most prominently—their kick. Kron has the patience of Penelope: she'll work a gag until the laughter has a chance to build and ebb. In "The Secretaries," the ghoulish, revenge-on-men office romp that she and her colleagues, the Five Lesbian Brothers, have concocted for New York Theatre Workshop, the humor comes in waves, especially late in the play, when Kron gives a textbook demonstration of the slow burn. The setup is simple: she and her co-workers are doing some shakes-only slimming, and Kron's character, Peaches Martin, sneaks a sticky bun. Just as she takes a bite, the telephone rings. Her response is brilliant: the face remains static while the inner woman screams.

In this office—it's at an Oregon lumber mill, and it's presided over by a beautiful, lupine manager (Peg Healey), who imposes a Stepford-like discipline on her employees—the inner woman has plenty of opportunity to scream. The women's chief pastime is to ice male co-workers. The plot, however, does more than rehash "Nine to Five." Female bodily obsession is the darker theme; at one point the manager demands from her minions samples of their menstrual blood. That this rises above mere outrageousness testifies to the play's achievement: "The Secretaries" is a sustained, amusing look at the fine line between aggression and assertiveness.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

A Cheever Evening—A. R. Gurney's new play, based on eighteen short stories by John Cheever. With John Cunningham, Jack Gilpin, Julie Hagerty, Mary Beth Peil, Robert Stanton, and Jennifer Van Dyke. In previews. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Down by the Ocean—A play written and directed by P. J. Barry, presented by the York Theatre Company. Previews Sept. 21-23. Opens Sept. 24 at 8 and runs through Oct. 23. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream—The Ridiculous Theatrical Company puts its spin on Shakespeare's comedy, directed by, and starring, Everett Quinton. In previews. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

Mother and Child—Helen Harrelson portrays a Mississippi woman who goes to New York to be with her dying son, played by Anthony M. Brown. The drama was written and directed by Matthew Lombardo. Preview on Sept. 21. Opens Sept. 22 at 8. (McGinn/Cazale, Broadway at 76th St. 279-4200.)

Show Boat—The 1927 musical by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II, in a new production directed by Hal Prince. This revival, which originated in Toronto last year, features John McMartin, Elaine Stritch, Rebecca Luker, Lonette McKee, Mark Jacoby, and Michel Bell. Previews begin Sept. 22. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Talking Pictures—A drama by Horton Foote, this season's playwright in residence at the Signature Theatre Company. The cast includes Hallie Foote. Opens Sept. 23 at 8 and runs through Oct. 23. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 279-4200.)

Uncommon Women and Others—Second Stage's revival of Wendy Wasserstein's 1977 play, directed by Carole Rothman. With Joan Buddenhagen, Danielle Ferland, Jessica Lundy, Mary McCann, Haviland Morris, Robin Morse, Rosemary Murphy, Dina Pearlman, and Stephanie Roth. Previews begin Sept. 27. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

All in the Timing—Six sparkling short plays by David Ives add up to one enchanted evening. Ives and the deft director, Jason McConnell Buzas, are wonderfully served by their actors. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Beauty and the Beast—Disney's Broadway money-spinner, adapted from the animated-film version, has a few moments of solid-gold theatrical amazement: the showstopping "Be Our Guest" production number and the Beast's transformation into the Prince. Directed by Robert Jess Roth. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/2/94.) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100.)

Carousel—Nicholas Hytner's authoritative direction combines with Bob Crowley's inspired sets to transplant the National Theatre's 1993 smash hit onto the Vivian Beaumont stage. Bold, beautiful, and controversial, this multicultural reinterpretation launches Rodgers and Hammerstein toward the twenty-first century. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

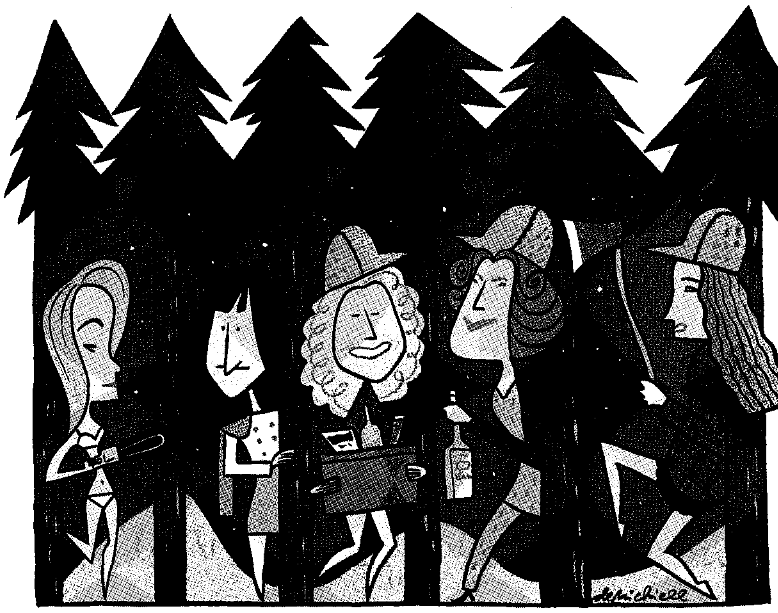
Damn Yankees—The big musical hit of 1955 is back, in its first Broadway revival. George Abbott and Douglass Wallop's book has been jarringly updated by the director, Jack O'Brien (with the help of the hundred-and-six-year-old Mr. Abbott). But the cast, which includes Victor Garber and Jared Emick, delivers Richard Adler and Jerry Ross's music with sporty energy, and Rob Marshall has created some lively dance numbers. (4/4/94) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Faith Journey—A gospel musical, set in the South during the civil-rights movement. Book and lyrics by Clarence Cuthbertson and George Broderick, who also wrote the music. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

First Night—Lannyl Stephens and Daniel McDonald in a romantic comedy by Jack Neary. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

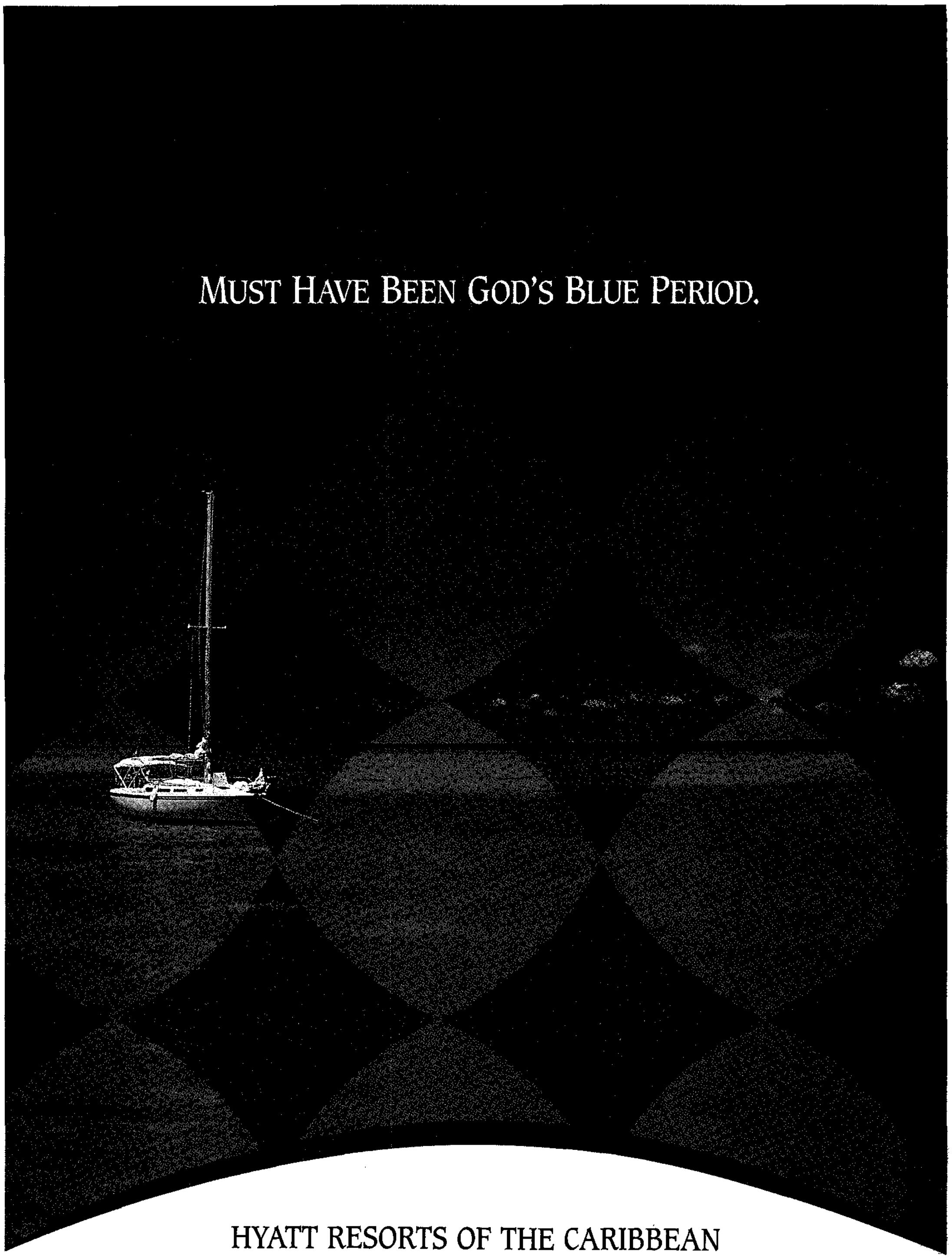
Grease!—The talented cast and the inventive production team show off the gleeful phonyness of Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey's musical with unembarrassed affection, and the result is a fun fake that's not trying to pass as the real thing. Rosie O'Donnell is very likable as the tough-talking Rizzo, and Billy Porter blows the lid off the joint with his Little Richard-like rendition of "Beauty School Dropout." Jeff Calhoun directed and choreographed. (5/30/94) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Hysterical Blindness and Other Southern Tragedies That Have Plagued My Life Thus Far—An autobiographical musical-comedy revue written by Leslie Jordan and starring Mark Baker. It's a tale of growing up Tennessean, thes-



The Five Lesbian Brothers in "The Secretaries."

ROBERT DEMICHIELL



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THE THEATRE—Cont'd

pian, and gay. Joe Patrick Ward's energetic musical numbers run the gamut from corn to gospel. (Playhouse on Vandam, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555.)

An Inspector Calls—J. B. Priestley's 1945 mystery is not really a play—it's a speech, about every man's link to every other man. The fine cast, which includes Kenneth Cranham, Philip Bosco, and Jane Adams, has ideas, not actions, to play. Directed by Stephen Daldry. (5/16/94) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Jackie Mason: Politically Incorrect—A former rabbi from a family of rabbis, Mason uses the stage as his bully pulpit. Behind his shtick, which is sometimes vulgar but always funny, is a fundamentalist disgust at the world's fraud, wickedness, hypocrisy, and inhumanity. (4/25/94) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Jelly Roll!—Vernel Bagneris stars in a musical show about Jelly Roll Morton. With Morten Gunnar Larsen on piano. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 777-7474.)

The Keepers—A drama by Barbara Lebow, set in Maine in the eighteen-fifties. Presented by Jean Cocteau Repertory. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

King Lear—The Pearl Theatre Company's first show in its new home. Robert Hock has the title role in Shakespeare's play. (Theatre 80, at 80 St. Mark's Pl. 598-9802.)

King Ubu—Paul Todaro directed and stars in this production of George Rand's deft new translation of Alfred Jarry's fin-de-siècle satire. The Independent Theatre Company gives a diverting and campy spin to the nasty, low-down goings on. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088. Closes Oct. 8.)

Laughing Matters—Nick Ullett's one-man show about acting, advertising, marriage, and other matters. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-7471. Closes Oct. 9.)

The Nest—First-time parents Kurt and Martha, who are masters of the sunny aphorism, learn the perils of blind obedience in this blue-collar morality tale by the Bavarian playwright Franz Xaver Kroetz. Ably directed by Moisés Kaufman, the matter-of-fact staging includes some surprisingly moving puppet-show interludes. Translated from the German by Roger Downey. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109. Closes Oct. 2.)

Passion—Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's listless epistolary musical, in which the main characters spend much of their time singing love letters to and from each other. Jere Shea and Marin Mazzie are in fine voice as a dashing soldier and his lover, and Donna Murphy gives a stunning performance as Fosca, the predatory heroine. Lapine, who wrote the libretto, directed. (5/23/94) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Philadelphia, Here I Come!—The Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of Brian Friel's 1966 play, with Milo O'Shea, Robert Sean Leonard, Jim True, and Pauline Flanagan. Joe Dowling directed. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

The Secretaries—A comedy, set in the office of an Oregon lumber mill, written and performed by the Five Lesbian Brothers (Maureen Angelos, Babs Davy, Dominique Dibbell, Peg Healey, and Lisa Kron). (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989.)

Stomp—A group of eight British rhythm specialists who use unconventional percussion instruments. The noise is terrific. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Meredith Monk on Roosevelt Island.

DAVID HUGHES

That's Life!—A seriocomic revue about the variety of Jewish life in America. Thirteen composers and lyricists collaborated on the twenty musical numbers. The choreography and direction are by Helen Butleroff. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

Three Tall Women—A moving, poetic play by Edward Albee, which is dominated by the huge, heroic performance of Myra Carter. Jordan Baker and the droll and delightful Marian Seldes are also in the cast. (5/16/94) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

ANGELS IN AMERICA: “Millennium Approaches” and “Perestroika.” (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.) . . . **BLOOD BROTHERS:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WHO'S TOMMY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Tip or Die—A one-woman show by Linda Mancini, performance artist and former waitress. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. Sept. 22-25 at 7:30.)

How to Operate Your Brain—Direct from the Lollapalooza tour, Timothy Leary delivers his solo performance/“multimedia, rave lecture.” (Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway. 966-9520. Sept. 22 at 8.)

DANCE

This Island Earth

The choreographer Meredith Monk has always been eager to incorporate large performance spaces into her multimedia extravaganzas, and on September 23-25 she will outdo herself. Her new two-part work, “American Archeology #1: Roosevelt Island,” moves along the entire length of Roosevelt Island, from Lighthouse Park, at the northern end, to the asylum ruins, at the southern tip. Monk describes the piece, her first site-specific work since the late seventies, as “one big movie.” It's a choreographic and musical composition on a grand scale, involving about sixty singers and performers (some in late-nineteenth-century costume), along with Roosevelt Island residents and at least one horse.

As its title might suggest, “American Archeology” begins in the present and moves backward in time. The first part, at Lighthouse Park, is dedicated to the contemporary Roosevelt Island community, and features tableaux accompanied by Monk's wordless choral arrangements. In the second part, the ruins of the buildings that once housed the mentally ill, charity cases, and smallpox victims will provide an evocative backdrop for further tableaux. “The idea is to invoke the spirits of outcasts of the past,” Monk says, but she adds that the piece will end with a sort of pageant—“like a medieval procession”—that will bring the audience back to our own complicated time.

Tomoe Shizune & Hakutobo—The Tokyo-based choreographer and company will perform a reconceived version of the 1991 “Renyo (Far from the Lotus),” an evening-length work based on the concept of the Jizo, the guardian deity of children. While adhering to the controlled, contemplative qualities of butoh, this eight-member troupe does some surprisingly unbutohlike things—not always moving in slower-than-slow-motion, for example. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Sept. 21-23 at 8, Sept. 24 at 2 and 8, and Sept. 25 at 2 and 7:30.)

Tan Dun and Muna Tseng—The composer and the choreographer present “The Pink,” based on an erotic Chinese novel of the sixteenth century and performed by dancers, vocalist/performance artists, and instrumentalists. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. Sept. 22-24 at 7:30 and Sept. 25 at 3. Through Oct. 2.)

John Kelly—In “Constant Stranger,” an evening-length solo dance-theatre work in progress. Presented by the Danspace Project. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Sept. 22-25 at 8:30. Through Oct. 2.)

Meredith Monk—Offering “American Archeology #1: Roosevelt Island” (première). (Roosevelt Island. Part 1: Lighthouse Park, Sept. 23-25 at 4. Part 2: Renwick Ruin, Sept. 23-25 at 6:15. For information, call 206-1440.)

Lyon Opera Ballet—The opening performance of a one-week engagement by a French troupe: “Bogus Pomp” (New York première), “My Tears Have Been My Meat Night and Day,” “Larmes Blanches,” and “Contrastes.” (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Sept. 21 at 8. Through Oct. 3.)

NIGHT LIFE

Still Flying

THE tenor saxophonist and bandleader Illinois Jacquet, nearing seventy-two, is a journeyman survivor whose career has arranged itself in a series of little peaks. Thus: his famous leaping solo on Lionel Hampton's recording of "Flying Home," set down when Jacquet was nineteen; his appearance with Harry Edison, Lester Young, and Sid Catlett in Gjon Mili's pioneering 1944 short, "Jammin' the Blues"; the screeching, stomping tenor "battles" he and Flip Phillips carried on in the fifties as members of Jazz at the Philharmonic (battles that presaged the jazz avant-garde of the sixties, to say nothing of heavy-metal rock); his surprising and often successful attempts in the sixties to make the bassoon, of all instruments, bend to the winds of jazz improvisation; and, in 1983, his decision to put together a big band, which has become a smooth, highly popular Basie-like group, easy to dance to, and most notable for the sumptuous sound of its leader's tenor. Indeed, it has been said that Jacquet's tone on a ballad is beautiful enough to hang on the wall.

A concert celebrating his fifty-year career will be held at Carnegie Hall on September 27, the celebrants to include Ray Charles, Harry Edison, and Joshua Redman. The following week, Jacquet will take his band back into the Tavern on the Green, which should consider removing some tables, putting down a floor, and letting the dancers go.

CONCERTS

American Music Club/Grant Lee Buffalo/Saint Etienne—An amazing triple-header. American Music Club's colorless name is a kind of grifter's camouflage for a band with a spectacularly unfashionable and eccentric sound. The band's singer and lyricist, Mark Eitzel (who performs solo at the Mercury Lounge on Sept. 21 and at Maxwell's on Sept. 22), is perhaps the finest poet of tenderloin passion and despair since Tom Waits. / Grant Lee Buffalo is the brainchild of Grant Lee Phillips, a guitarist and singer who is one of the sharpest, canniest, and most indefinable new songwriters in rock. His Los Angeles-based trio released its first album, "Fuzzy," last year, and a forthcoming release, "Mighty Joe Moon," is equally superb. / The British trio Saint Etienne is technically an electro-pop outfit, but the sweetly melodic female vocals and warm, lush instrumental flourishes on its new album, "Tiger Bay," hark back to the days when birds like Petula Clark and Lulu topped the charts. Jolly good fun. With Soul Coughing and Poster Children. (Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. Sept. 23 at 8. For tickets, call 307-7171.)

Marcus Roberts—Artistically speaking, the pianist Marcus Roberts is a split personality. An ensemble player of great ingenuity and charm, Roberts can also be the most self-conscious of soloists, substituting stilted structural ploys for emotion and ideas. Maybe this wide-open space will loosen him up. With Reginald Veal and Lewis Nash. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. Sept. 21 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.)

Cathal McConnell and Len Graham—In a concert of traditional Irish music. (Main Building, New York University, 100 Washington Sq. E. Sept. 21 at 6. No tickets necessary.)

Snoop Doggy Dogg—On the bill are Jodeci, Lady of Rage, and Black Street with Teddy Riley. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6741. Sept. 23 at 7:30.)

Whitney Houston—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Sept. 21, Sept. 23-24, and Sept. 27, all at 8.

Confederate Railroad—With BethAnn Clayton. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Sept. 22 at 8.)

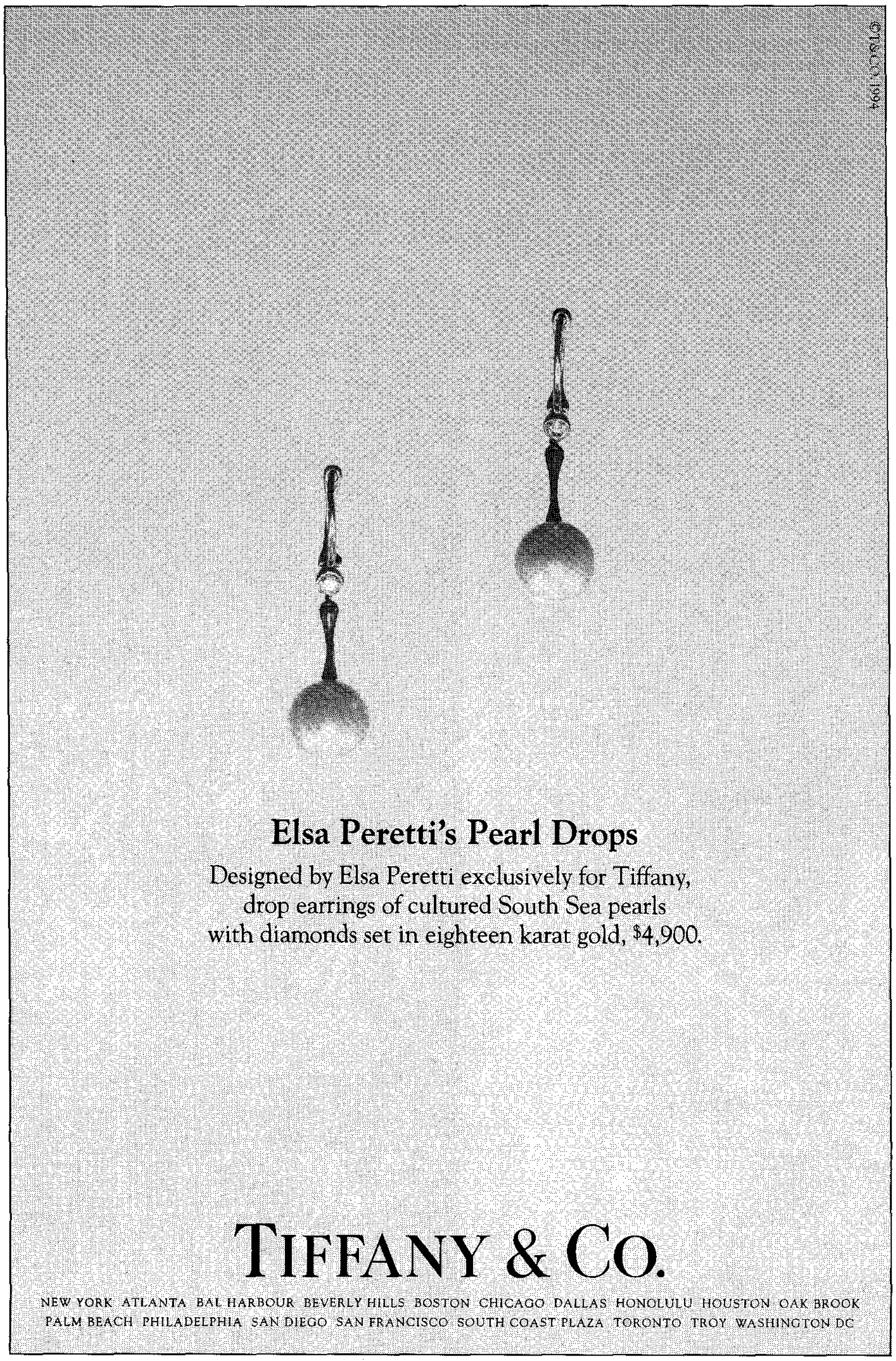
Lonnie Youngblood Band—Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St. Sept. 23 at 1 P.M. No tickets necessary.

T. V. Sankaranarayanan—Performing vocal music from South India. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. Sept. 23 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Illinois Jacquet and His Big Band—With Ray Charles, Joshua Redman, Roy Haynes, Milt Hinton, and others. (Carnegie Hall. Sept. 27 at 8.)

CLUBS

Academy, 234 W. 43rd St.—On Sept. 21, catch a quadruple bill of topnotch alternative pop, featuring **CONSOLIDATED, MC 900 FT. JESUS, WEEZER,** and, perhaps most notably, Courtney Love's band, **HOLE.** Kurt Cobain's widow popped up at a Lemonheads concert a few months back, but this will be her first New York club appearance with her own group since Cobain's suicide. Since Hole's second album, "Live Through This," is a powerful work in its own right, this will be more than a tabloid gig. **QUICKSAND** arrives on Sept. 22, with guests Into Another and Orange 9MM. On Sept. 24, **DAVID LEE ROTH** swings by. Back in 1985, Roth had the world in the palm of his hand. His Felliniesque video for "Just a Gigolo" (from the EP "Crazy from the Heat") was a hit on MTV, and his telegenic splendor inspired talk of a film career. Hypnotized by his own hype, Roth went a little loco; he parted ways with Van Halen, a move that unleashed the horror that is Sammy Hagar. Still, his most recent record,



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Blarney Star, 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—On Sept. 23: an evening of banjo and fiddle with **SEAMUS EGAN** and **WINNIE HORAN.**

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—**POLYTOWN** appears on Sept. 21-22. Polytown is a new power trio featuring the hyperkinetic drummer Terry Bozzio, who, prior to a stint with Missing Persons, was a major force with Frank Zappa, U.K., and other we-can-play-it-faster-than-you fanatics. Joining Bozzio will be the fretless (and occasionally eyebrowless) bassist Mick Karn, whose burbling, arbitrary bass lines anchored the band Japan. Experimental guitarist David Torn rounds out the lineup. **JOHN CALE** is here on Sept. 23-24. In his Velvet Underground days, Cale played doormat to Lou Reed. With Brian Eno, he wrote some haunting songs. His output as a solo artist has been uneven but always interesting. On Sept. 25: "The Music of Frank Zappa," a tribute to the late great wizard, led by **ED PALERMO'S BIG BAND.**

Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (429-8392)—On Sept. 23, catch **COBRA VERDE,** the **FIGGS,** and **GIANT SAND.**

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—On Sept. 22, a bunch of progressive-leaning up-and-comers share the bill: **MOTHER, FUZZY, VERUCA SALT,** and **FOSSIL.** More of the same on Sept. 24, with **SEED** and **GIN MILL.** . . . ¶ Next door, at CB's Gallery, **DANIEL CARTIER** entertains on Sept. 22.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—A new palace dedicated to the music of the Windy City. Sept. 21-24: Spend some time with **ROOSEVELT (BOOBA) BARNES & THE PLAYBOYS.**

Cleopatra Supper Club, 327 W. 44th St. (262-1111)—Live music, belly dancing, and a whirling dervish, every Wednesday through Sunday.

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—On Sept. 22: the legendary **ALEX CHILTON.** Chilton sang "The Letter" with the Box Tops way back when, but he's best known for his early-seventies work with the seminal pop band Big Star. He's never found his own row to hoe, but there are still flashes of genius. Every Monday in September, local heavyweights **DANNY BLUME** and **BEN PEROWSKY** curate a free evening of noise and art. Sept. 26: Don't miss two of New York's finest, **FERTILE CRESCENT** and the **OREN BLOEDOW** band. Fertile Crescent's front man, Erik Sanko, has worked with such desperadoes as John Lurie, Gavin Friday, and John Waite, but his own raunchy material is full of XTC-style quirks and Beatles-happy hooks. Bloedow is a hardboiled downtown legend whose songs chart twisted tales of unrequited love and bad landlords. Wednesday nights are given over to experimental d.j. music.

Denim & Diamonds, 511 Lexington Ave., at 48th St. (371-1600)—Sept. 25, from 4 to 9, belongs to **DOUG STEVENS & THE OUTBAND,** a gay country outfit whose leader, a former opera singer, hails from Tupelo, Mississippi. The gig is a benefit for G. L. Friendly, a gay and lesbian community center in Biloxi.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—**JULIA FORDHAM** performs on Sept. 21. Fordham has been making smart, warm, vibrant adult-contemporary pop for years now, but in spite of her graceful tunes and supple alto—not to mention her sleek beauty—the British songbird has yet to tap into a mainstream audience. Let the masses have Celine Dion—check out Fordham at this cozy venue, where she'll be promoting her excellent new album, "Falling Forward." Sept. 27: The Loser's Lounge deconstructs the music of Neil Diamond. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** continues to pack them in every Thursday. Dining.

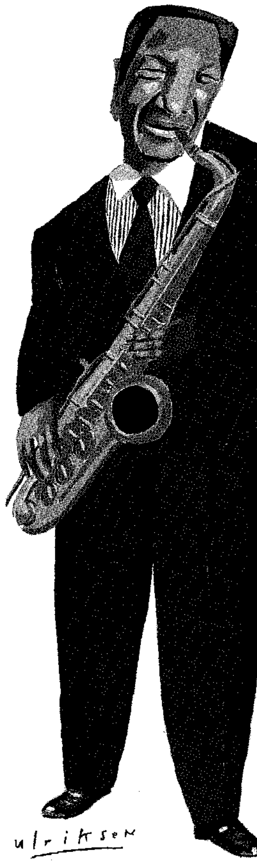
Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—On Sept. 21: **WEEN** and **ECHOBELLY** top a roster that also includes Motocaster and Cellophane. Sept. 22: **THINKING FELLERS UNION LOCAL 282** and **UNSANE** headline a night of excellent new music. **OZRIC TENTACLES** arrives on Sept. 23, with Transglobal Underground. The Tentacles, who spring from England and dress like the groovy squatters in "In the Name of the Father," play aggressive instrumental music rife with Middle Eastern scales and other tabouli-flavored references. The band has a tendency toward psychedelia—strobe lights, fog machines, ganja advocacy—but they're more interesting than your average hippies. On Sept. 24: **SHUDDER TO THINK,** with the **DAMNBUILDERS,** Sunny Day, Real Estate, and Satchel. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Limelight, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—**SAINT ETIENNE** is in on Sept. 24, with **IVY.**

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—American Music Club front man **MARC EITZEL** makes a special solo appearance on Sept. 22. On Sept. 24, check out **VERUCA SALT** and **WEEZER** (who are more accessible than their names might suggest). On Sept. 25: the **SPINANES,** an indie band with a wispy-voiced female singer that the critics adore. With Cub.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—**MARK EITZEL** is here (again) on Sept. 21. Spoken-word sensation **MAGGIE ESTEP** says interesting things on Sept. 24, with **SOUL COUGHING.** On Sept. 26: **SPIRIT OF THE WEST,** a folk-rock band based in Vancouver. Like their fellow-Canadian Sarah McLachlan, these musicians can sound deceptively Celtic at times, infusing their playful tunes with lovely touches of accordion, mandolin, and flute. With guest Alejandro Escovedo.

Paddy Reilly's Music Bar, 519 Second Ave., at 29th St. (686-1210)—**BLACK 47** usually plays on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Séisiún—a traditional Irish jam—is on Thursday nights.



Illinois Jacquet at Carnegie Hall.

MARK ULRIKSEN

Les Poulets, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—**JOSE ALBERTO** appears on Sept. 23, and **HERMANOS MORENO** on Sept. 24. Dining.

Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. (247-0200)—Sept. 27: Heads bang with extreme prejudice when **HOUSE OF PAIN** and **BIOHAZARD** perform.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—**GIL SCOTT-HERON** is in the house on Sept. 21-22. Back in the seventies, while many of his R. & B. peers were blissfully succumbing to disco fever, singer-pianist Scott-Heron (who's also a poet and novelist) prefigured the sober social consciousness of today's more outspoken hip-hop artists. He's currently promoting his first album in twelve years, "Spirits." **ABBEY LINCOLN** begins a three-night run on Sept. 27. Closed Sundays. Dining.

Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—**JEFF BUCKLEY** stops by on Sept. 24. On his début album, "Grace," the son of folksinger Tim Buckley serves up jarring, lyrical rock songs awash in vocal and instrumental drama. Buckley's intuitive use of dynamics is particularly striking, and his tenor is pure and fine, although he's occasionally given to histrionics. He has already proved that his passion can burn holes in the walls of small clubs like Café Sin-é; now he'll have the chance to prove his mettle in a slightly more imposing setting. Thursday nights belong to **GIANT STEP,** a roving collective of musicians, rappers, and d.j.s who mix jazz, funk, and hip-hop.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Surf-guitar god **DICK DALE** appears on Sept. 21, with Big Sandy & His Fly Rite Boys. Sept. 22: The **SILOS.** Sept. 23: **JERRY JEFF WALKER,** with Bill Kirchen. Monday nights, Tramps presents Soul Kitchen, an evening of seventies funk and R. & B. for devotees of Don Cornelius.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—The Southwestern art-thrash band **GIANT SAND** pours forth its dusky, rootsy aura on Sept. 22. Also appearing will be **BEN HARPER,** a young singer-songwriter whose bleak yet stirring ditties have been getting good notices, along with 5-8, Letters to Cleo, and Dish.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **BOBBY CALDWELL** is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Dining.

Arthur's Tavern, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—Mondays belong to the Grove Street Stompers, Tuesdays through Thursdays to Al Bundy and Johnny Parker, weekends to the Freddy Francis trio, and Sundays to Lee Lorenz and the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—Tuesdays through Saturdays, actress/singer/comedienne **TOVAH FELDSHUH** has the stage. Feldshuh's variety act sets comic characterizations alongside standards (Gershwin, Jerry Herman, Rodgers and Hart) arranged by Wally Harper.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—The **MAX ROACH DOUBLE QUARTET** appears through Sept. 25. Roach's outfit, with more than a decade of work behind it, is an institution by now. Meshing his own lean, pianoless band with a string quartet (which features his daughter Maxine, on viola) affords Roach the latitude to indulge in textures both lush and dissonant. Meanwhile, his brilliant drumming directs the ensemble, a master conductor's baton stroke behind each emphatic beat. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—**JOHN HICKS** and **PETER WASHINGTON** play through Sept. 24, joined by **CRAIG HANDY** for the last three performances. One of New York's most in-demand saxophonists, Handy has shown astonishing musical growth over the past few years. His measured, assured playing still clearly betrays his influences: Sonny Rollins, Lester Young, and Dexter Gordon. On Sept. 25, catch **CHARLES THOMAS, RAY DRUMMOND,** and **LEWIS NASH.** Beginning Sept. 26: the **CHRIS ANDERSON** trio.

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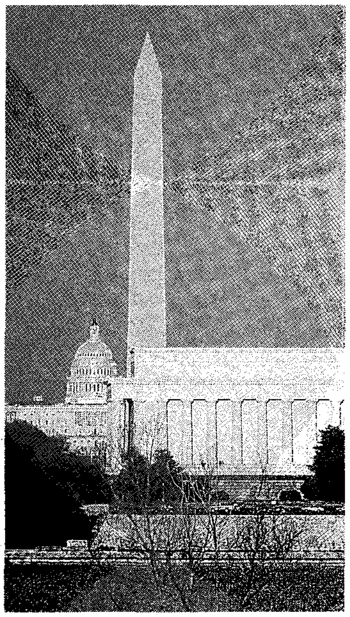

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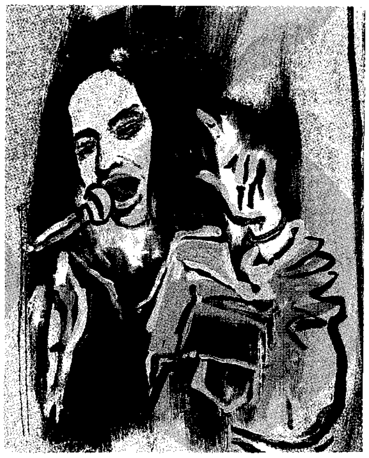
NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—Vocalist **BARBARA COOK** is currently in residence, backed up by her longtime pianist and arranger **WALLY HARPER.** Cook retains almost defiantly the voice of a nineteen-fifties Broadway ingénue. She and Mel Tormé (currently at Michael's Pub) could go on tour as the Mr. and Mrs. Ponce de León of the club circuit. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **RONNY WHYTE** presides at the piano. Whyte (handsome, dapper, easygoing) is a first-class cabaret singer. His voice and delivery resemble Bobby Short's, and he is a creditable accompanist and jazz pianist. He favors songs that have fallen by the wayside—the ones dropped from shows on opening night or those that landed on the cutting-room floor. Dining.



Spoken-word performer Maggie Estep at Mercury Lounge.

KAREN CALDICOTT

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—The **SCOTT HAMILTON** quintet continues through Sept. 25. The **AL GREY** sextet starts on Sept. 27. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A cool, sumptuous piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel. Wednesdays through Saturdays, **DONALD JOHNSTON** is the featured pianist. Dining.

Five Spot, 4 W. 31st St. (631-0100)—The **RICKY FORD** quartet performs on Sept. 22-24. Born just a few steps out of time, Ford was a wunderkind neo-con before there was a neo-con movement. Now a venerated veteran in his early forties, the mighty tenor saxophonist can still startle with bulldozing bop runs. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Sept. 24: saxophonist **WES ANDERSON.** Though he's a distinctive voice in Wynton Marsalis's ensembles, Anderson has been a team player long enough. Supporting him in this initial spotlight gig will be two other moonlighting buddies from the Marsalis crew, bassist Ben Wolf and the talented pianist Eric Reed. **JAMES CARTER** begins an engagement on Sept. 27.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—**STEVE KUHN** and **DAVID FINCK** join forces on Sept. 21-23. **MARC JOHNSON** takes over on Sept. 24-25.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—John Zorn's **COBRA** is in on Sept. 25. **BOBBY PREVITE** performs on Sept. 26, with an early solo show by avant accordionist **GUY KLUCEVSEK.**

Le Madeleine, 403 W. 43rd St. (246-2993)—Every Sunday evening, guitar great **GENE BERTONCINI** lights up this cozy Hell's Kitchen bistro with his simmering melodicism and chordal grace. Monday nights are given over to the cabaret inventions of **JOHN WALLOWITCH** and **BERTRAM ROSS.**

Metropolis, 31 Union Square W. (675-2300)—Monday nights, catch **CON-TRI-BUTION,** a reggae-tinged jazz collective. Tuesdays are given over to the **GEORGE GEE ORCHESTRA,** a seventeen-piece swing band. The **TOMMY FLANAGAN** trio plays on Sept. 22-24. In his sixties, Flanagan now presides over all of jazz piano. Of a poetic cast, he unreels endlessly supple lines, paying them out at whatever speed they demand. He likes to spread the melody out in chords in the first chorus, then compress the song into brand-new single-note improvisations that contain sudden ascending arpeggios, beautiful little countermelodies, and patches of mock double time. Flanagan will feature tunes from his two recent CDs, "Let's" and "Lady Be Good . . . For Ella."

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—**MEL TORMÉ** holds forth every night but Mondays. Tormé's voice—small, precise, immediately identifiable, in the way Tony Bennett's is—has stayed about the same, but the buzzing, in-your-ear style he started out with thirty years ago has long since given way to an affable, swinging, hornlike attack much admired by musicians and other singers. Beyond being a singer's singer, he has also become an entertainer's entertainer, and he keeps one's eyes hopping. A cheerful, hyperactive show. On Mondays, Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the **NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA,** a Dixieland-jazz ensemble.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—Cabaret deity **KAREN AKERS** is presently holding forth. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, and swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Michael Andrew and Claudette Sierra.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—Sept. 21: The **RON ODRICH** quintet, with horn player **CLARK TERRY.** Thursdays belong to Stan Rubin's big band and Phoebe Légère; Fridays to Lew Anderson's big band and the Kit McClure sextet; and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—The **MULGREW MILLER** quintet continues through Sept. 22. On Sept. 23-24, **TERUMASA HINO,** the Japanese trumpeter and composer, expands his palette and indulges in what is probably every jazzman's unspoken dream: a big band. Leading such an outfit, he has the imagination to pull off a post-bop extravaganza. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

Tatou, 151 E. 50th St. (753-1144)—The **NAT JONES** trio entertains every weekend. The rest of the week, a saucy cabaret revue called "Just for Kicks." Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—The **DOROTHY DONEGAN** trio continues through Sept. 25. Now in her seventies, Donegan can still scare your pants off with her wild, free-association piano discourses. She'll try anything, even the impossible, interpolating classical themes into Tin Pan Alley, slinging off Tatum volleys, and romping through stride passages when the spirit moves her. It's on-the-edge stuff, fun and life-affirming.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—**KENNY BARRON, BUSTER WILLIAMS, BEN RILEY,** and **JESSE DAVIS** are here through Sept. 25. The team of pianist Barron, bassist Williams, and drummer Riley is more than a rhythm section—it's a brotherhood. These men have been playing together since the early eighties, when they formed Sphere, a small and superb repertory group. During the next three weeks, they will play host to several different saxophonists, and Davis is up first. He's a new-generation bopster with a warm tone and Parker-Adderley aspirations. Starting Sept. 27, the core trio is joined by **JAMES SPAULDING,** a mainstay of some of the more radical groups of the sixties. Mellower today, Spaulding is enjoying new visibility. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—The **CARL ALLEN** quintet plays on Sept. 21-24. On Sept. 25, check out the **GUST WILLIAM TSILIS** quintet.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—**ROY MERIWETHER, LYNN SEATON,** and **VINCENT ECTOR** perform through Sept. 24. On Sept. 25: **BOB KINDRED, BILL CHARLAP,** and **DAVID FINCK.** Guitarist **GENE BERTONCINI** and bassist **MICHAEL MOORE** start on Sept. 26.

ART

Into the Black

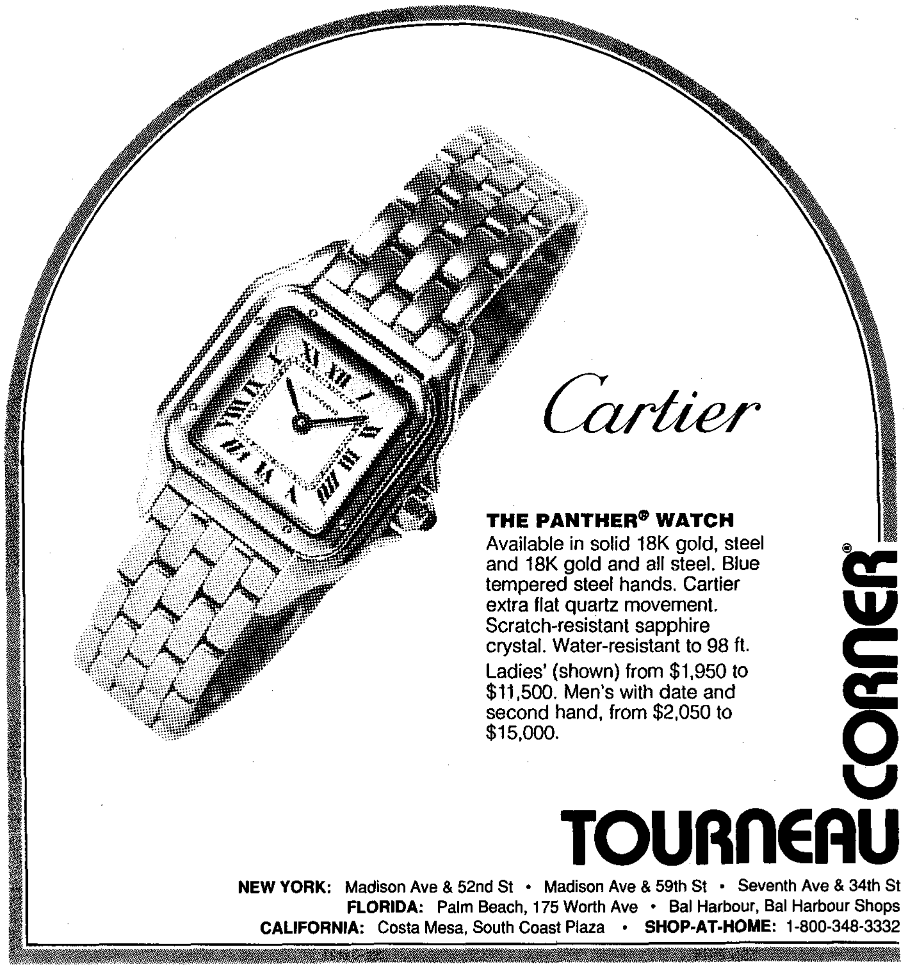
"When I got to Paris I was still a Social Realist but I had this Pollock thing in my stomach, eating away at me," Al Held recalled in an interview from the mid-seventies. The painter is best known for his large-scale, sometimes gigantic exercises in hard-edged, perspectivally vertiginous geometrics—work that speaks of the optical luxuriance of some sixties art, rather than the turgid emotionalism of Abstract Expressionism in the fifties. The Robert Miller Gallery (41 East 57th Street; through October 8) is showing Held's early abstract paintings, done in Paris between 1950 and 1952, when the artist was still in his early twenties and under the spell of Jackson Pollock's poured paintings.

With their cake-frosting impastos—in some works the pigment has been laid down with a trowel—Held's Paris paintings can look like Abstract Expressionist gesturalism gone gaga. These paintings, predominately black with vertical or horizontal bisections of white mixed with streaks of red, blue, or ochre, are reminiscent of Barnett Newman's zips and Mark Rothko's irradiated oblongs. Like Rothko's and Newman's work, Held's paintings aspire to a Burkean sublime of awe and terror: in the expanse of unreflective blackness, his smears of white and color might be seen as furtive flashes of diminishing light. But even as the paintings seem to choke on existentialism, the tarlike materiality of their surfaces cuts against the grain of a too fanciful transcendentalism.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Origins of Impressionism" begins with paintings seen at the historic and influential Salon of 1859 and includes nudes, landscapes, and still-lifes. Opens Sept. 27. . . . ¶ Gowns, daywear, and costume jewelry by Mme. Grès, a French designer active from 1930 to 1988, are on display in the Costume Institute. . . . ¶ "Pharaoh's Gifts: Stone Vessels from Ancient Egypt." . . . ¶ The Annenberg collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works includes paintings by Picasso and Renoir. . . . ¶ "American Impressionism and Realism: Drawings, Prints, and Photographs" features work from the museum's collection. . . . ¶ The roof garden is open through the end of October. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Cy Twombly: A Retrospective." Opens Sept. 25. (A concurrent show of his works will open at the Gagosian gallery on Sept. 24.) . . . ¶ "Drawing in Black and White: A Selection of Contemporary Works from the Collection." Opens Sept. 22. . . . ¶ "The Prints of Louise Bourgeois." On the tail of the Brooklyn Museum's retrospective, this exhibit focusses on the artist's etchings and lithographs, including "He Disappeared Into Complete Silence" (1946-47) and "Ste. Sebastienne" (1992). (There are two installations by Bourgeois at Blum gallery.) (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)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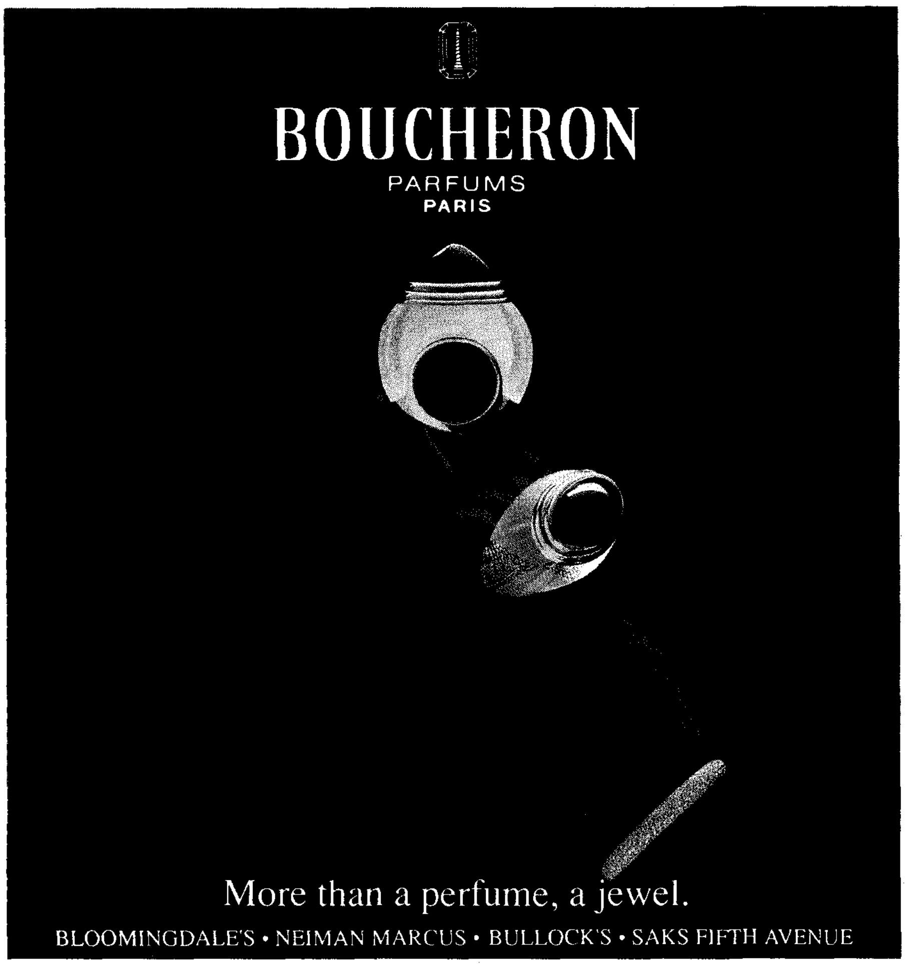
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ART—Cont'd

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—While the Goog is between shows, busy hands will be taking down "The Tradition of the New: Post-War Masterpieces from the Guggenheim Collection," to make room for "The Italian Metamorphosis, 1943-68," which will open Oct. 7. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays from 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8. Closed Sept. 21.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—"Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky." (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Jess: A Grand Collage, 1951-1993" includes this former nuclear physicist's painted reproductions of nineteenth-century photographs, as well as "Narkissos," a collage developed over thirty years. Opens Sept. 21. . . . ¶ "Neil Jenney: Natural Rationalism." Five paintings, including "North America Abstracted" (1978-80), which are Jenney's response to the American landscape tradition. . . . ¶ A retrospective of more than two hundred paintings and works on paper by Joseph Stella (1877-1946), the American Futurist. Through Oct. 9. (A complementary show is at the Kraushaar gallery.) (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

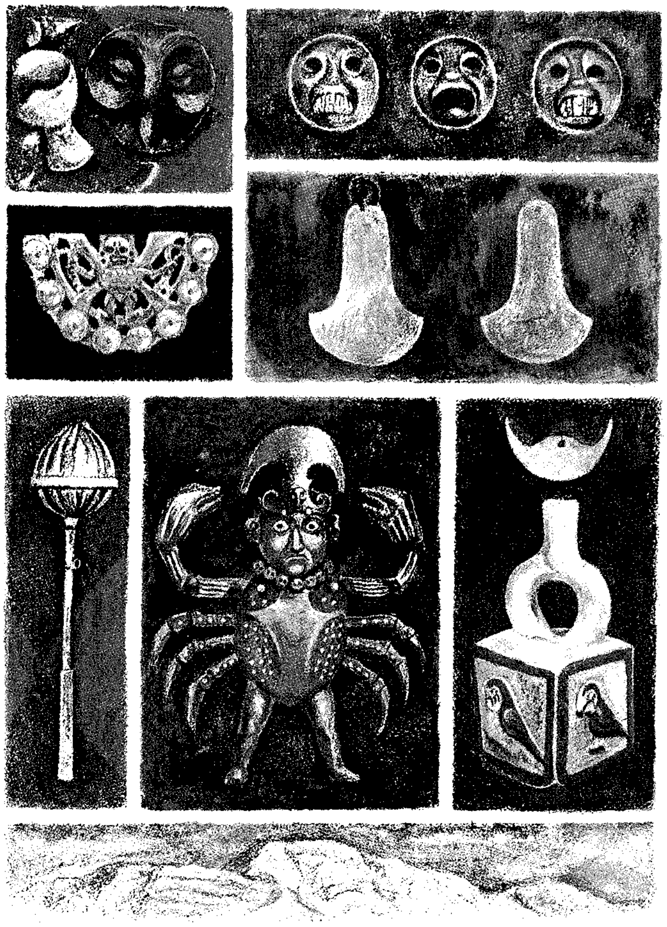
American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Empires Beyond the Great Wall: The Heritage of Genghis Khan." The exhibit includes documents, ornamental plates, weapons, and silk garments from the steppes. There are also full-sized replicas of a Mongolian nobleman's recently excavated tomb and a modern yurt. . . . ¶ "Royal Tombs of Sipán." Gold, silver, and gilded copper objects of the Moche, a pre-Inca civilization of northern Peru. The 1987 discovery of a series of undisturbed royal tombs dating to the fourth century A.D. established the Moche as one of the world's major ancient civilizations. Precious metals steal the show, though the ceramics on display are very fine, and Moche portrait heads speak as eloquently as Roman busts. The curators are probably right to identify Sipán as the richest burial site ever excavated in the New World. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—Selected works of Leon Polk Smith, an American abstract painter. . . . ¶ An exhibition of more than five hundred Egyptian objects from the museum's extensive collection, spanning thirteen hundred years of Pharaonic history. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Alternative Museum, 594 Broadway—"Hell: Luis Cruz Azaceta, Selected Works, 1978-93." Nineteen paintings that deal with AIDS, homelessness, and other contemporary issues, by a native of Cuba; a selection of Azaceta's drawings are also on view. Opens Sept. 27. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—"Bauhaus Workshops: 1919-1933." Furniture, metalwork, glass, textiles, and ceramics made by disciples of the German school of architecture and design. This small but instructive exhibit includes sections covering the role of women at the Bauhaus. Through Oct. 9. . . . ¶ "Sculptural Concerns: Contemporary American Metalworking." Jewelry, sculpture, and furniture, among other craftwork. Through Oct. 2. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"The Structure of Style: Dutch Modernism in the Applied Arts 1880-1930" details a period of increasing industrialization in Europe, through selected ceramics, magazine covers, and glassware, among other objects that echoed the arts-and-crafts movement in England. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)



"Royal Tombs of Sipán," at the American Museum of Natural History.

ALAN BLACKMAN

Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St.—"Andy Warhol: The Last Supper Paintings." Five large paintings and a handful of collage-studies based on Leonardo's "Christ and His Apostles at the Last Supper." . . . ¶ Irish artist James Coleman's "Projected Images, 1972-94" includes "La Tache Aveugle," "Seeing for Oneself," and "I.N.I.T.I.A.L.S." . . . ¶ "Rest" by Franz West, an installation of twenty-seven couches, on the center's roof. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—Sèvres porcelain, Limoges enamel, and paintings by Vermeer, Rembrandt, Whistler, and El Greco are all on view in this former residence of Henry Clay Frick (1849-1919). (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Goethe House, 1014 Fifth Ave., at 83rd St.—"Double Realities," photographs by Miyase Ceren, who uses photomontage to combine images. Through Oct. 15. (Open Tuesdays and Thursdays, noon to 7; Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, noon to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"The Thaw Collection: Master Drawings and New Acquisitions" ranges from a Jackson Pollock sketch to a Peter Paul Rubens study for "The Descent from the Cross." The collection is particularly strong in French drawings from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Opens Sept. 21. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museo del Barrio, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—The second part of the series "Artists Talk Back: Visual Conversations with El Museo" is titled "Recovering Popular Culture." The show's four sections include a bodega exhibit, work by contemporary craftspeople, and an exhibit pairing work from the permanent collection with that of contemporary artists. While there's no formal overview, the objects resonate with each other, as if the artists were saying, "This is what we are, this is what we have made, and how we have held on to our traditions." Next to woven baskets are Rene David Chamizo's undulating rattan wall hangings; the chockfull bodega setup ties in nicely with Pepón Osorio's "La Cama," a bed decorated with ribbons commemorating showers, weddings, and births, and with back-to-back pictures of the artist and his wife as children on the headboard. If the theme of the show occasionally seems forced, the momentum makes up for it. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 5; Thursdays, noon to 7.)

Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway—"Western Artists/African Art." It's difficult to study the masks and statuary in this exhibit of African objects owned by Western artists without considering a number of issues, such as how artists are influenced by other cultures and what it means to own work that was intended for religious ceremonies. Through Sept. 25. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5:30; Saturdays, noon to 8; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"Every Picture Tells a Story: Word and Image in American Folk Art" ranges from an illustrated birth certificate that predates the American Revolution to a work featuring the contemporary message "Try Me" painted on tin roofing. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Broadway Cavalcade: From the Battery to Harlem" follows the history of New York's diagonal boulevard, from its origins as an Indian footpath to its fame as the Great White Way. A section celebrating "Show Boat," complete with Playbills from the nine Broadway revivals, has recently been added. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

New Museum, 583 Broadway—"Visiting Hours: An Installation by Bob Flanagan in Collaboration with Sheree Rose." Flanagan, who has cystic fibrosis, will hold public visiting hours from his hospital-bed installation, where he will be available to discuss his illness and masochism. Opens Sept. 23. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"The Raw and the Cooked: Images of Food from the Renaissance to the Present." On the menu are a Dürer engraving of Adam and Eve sharing an apple, and a Berenice Abbott photograph of potatoes. . . . ¶ "Broken Rules and Double Crosses: Ken Campbell, an Artist's Books." (Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center—"New Performance in

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ART–Cont'd

Found Spaces: Documentary Photographs by Tom Brazil and Dona Ann McAdams" features Brazil and McAdams' pictures of performance art from the early seventies to the contemporary downtown scene, as well as black-and-white shots by Peter Moore (1932-94) from the early days of "happenings." (Open Mondays and Thursdays, noon to 8; Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, noon to 6.)

Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadow Park—The first exhibit in the museum's newly refurbished and expanded home is "Louis Armstrong: A Cultural Legacy." Original recordings, one of his trumpets from the twenties, and work by Stuart Davis, Weegee, and Annie Leibovitz, among others, chronicle the life of America's most famous trumpeter. Opens Sept. 23. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following lists lead off with new shows.)

Theodore Roszak—Sculptures and drawings, from 1942 to 1963, that trace the artist's transformation from a Constructivist into an Expressionist. Opens Sept. 24. Through Oct. 26. (Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St.)

Pavel Tchelitchew (1898-1957)—A survey of the Russian artist's work from the twenties, when he was influenced by the School of Paris, to his Surrealist period in New York, during the fifties. A focal point is the monumental painting "Hide-and-Seek," on loan from the Museum of Modern Art. Opens Sept. 21. Through Nov. 5. (Midtown Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

"Perceivable Realities"—An exhibition of works by Louis Michel Eilshemius, Morris Graves, Henry Ossawa Tanner, and Pavel Tchelitchew. Opens Sept. 22. Through Nov. 12. (Rosenfeld, 50 W. 57th St.)

"The Still-Life in Latin America"—Paintings and sculptures by Claudio Bravo, Frida Kahlo, Rafael Ferrer, and others. Opens Sept. 22. Through Oct. 29. (Martin, 23 E. 73rd St.)

"20th-Century Masters"—Picasso, Klee, Schwitters, and others. Opens Sept. 22. Through Nov. 12. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St.)

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Alan Bray—These casein-on-panel landscapes, most of which were exhibited this summer in Maine, in a retrospective at the Portland Museum of Art, are serious works that deserve to be taken seriously. Bray brings the analytic eye of a modernist still-life painter to the Maine landscape, and the results are cool, elegant, and blessedly devoid of the prettiness that has given recent American landscape painting a bad name. They are meditations on landscape, rather than attempts to open a window on the world. "The Turning of Winter," a snowscape at first thaw, evokes nature's majesty but drains away its wildness, suggesting something of the poise and repose of Giotto or Mantegna. Through Oct. 8. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St.)

Georg Baselitz—Works on paper, from the sixties, by this German Neo-Expressionist. Through Nov. 5. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

Lorenzo Cardi—Expressionistic paintings of nudes in enigmatic settings, by a young Italian artist. Through Oct. 22. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Francesco Clemente / Andrew Lord—"Purgatorio," a new series consisting of five paintings and four pastels. / Bronzes in the form of vessels. Through Oct. 15. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Manny Farber—Still-lifes of produce from the artist's garden in San Diego. They include references to his everyday life. Through Oct. 15. (Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

Chuck Forsman—Paintings of Western dams and reservoirs. Through Oct. 15. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

Al Held—Abstract paintings with linear elements, done in Paris in 1952. Through Oct. 8. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

David Hockney / Andrew Masullo—Semi-abstract landscape studies. / Tiny, suffocated abstractions that seem to aspire to flea-market versions of abstract art. Through Oct. 15. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Donald Judd / Jim Dine—Recent plywood and Plexiglas wall pieces, Corten-steel slabs stacked on the floor, and a multi-unit aluminum floor piece / Watercolor, pastel, and mixed-medium renderings on paper of plants and flowers. Through Oct. 15. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

Mark Mennin—Sculptural stone fragments depicting the sensory organs of humans, set in frames made by the artist. Through Oct. 15. (Marisa Del Re, 41 E. 57th St.)

Gabriel Orozco—An inflated-inner-tube piece, an installation made of wooden ice-cream spoons, and a small heart-shaped sculpture. Through Oct. 15. (Goodman, 24 W. 57th St.)

Robert Rauschenberg—New paintings, titled "Shales," combining bright-colored phototransfers and layers of wax. Through Oct. 5. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

Joseph Stella (1877-1946)—"People on the Page," a selection from the artist's sketchbooks. Through Oct. 8. (A retrospective of the artist's work is on view at the Whitney Museum.) (Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Tribute—An overview of the twenty-seven-year history of the Martha Jackson Gallery, including paintings and works on paper by Sam Francis, Paul Jenkins, Arshile Gorky, and others whose work has been shown at the gallery. Through Oct. 22. (Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Vito Acconci—A project called "Private Houses," featuring miniature models for outdoor sculptures. Opens Sept. 17. Through Oct. 15. (American Fine Arts, 22 Wooster St.)

Dale Chihuly—A show of brilliant-colored glass sculptures, the highlight of which is "Maccia Forest," an installation on pedestals. Opens Sept. 24. Through Oct. 15. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

Cy Twombly—"Untitled Painting," a monumental, primarily abstract triptych, begun in Italy in 1979. Opens Sept. 24. Through Dec. 17. (A complementary retrospective of the artist's work opens Sept. 25 at the Museum of Modern Art.) (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

Joe Zucker—Paintings and drawings from the artist's "Tofte Journal," a humorous record of a fishing expedition in Minnesota. Opens Sept. 24. Through Oct. 22. (Nolan-Eckman, 560 Broadway.)

"Four Russian Messages: Carnival or Drama?"—Paintings by contemporary artists from different generations and schools. Opens Sept. 21. Through Nov. 18. (Bromm, 90 West Broadway.)

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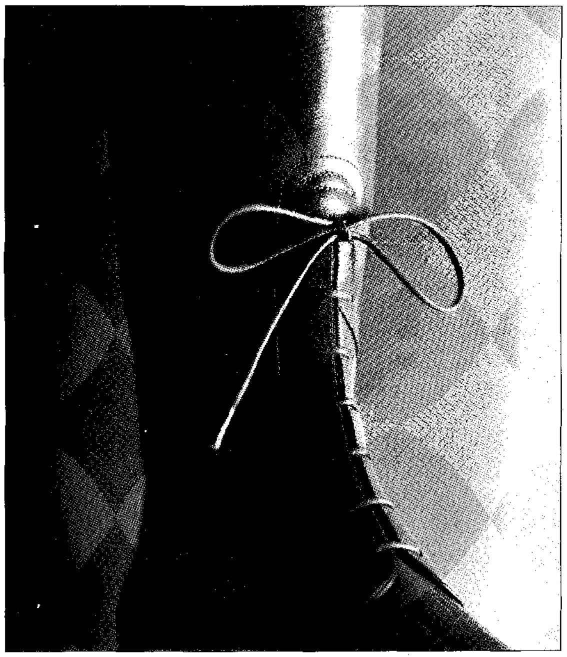
Eric Fischl—A series of five oil-on-linen canvases, each depicting a naked woman in an enervated or sullen pose. Fischl, an art superstar of the eighties, once seemed to be figurative painting's answer to David Lynch: he made his reputation with scenes of naughtiness and malfeasance in not so nice suburbia. Here the shock has been replaced by a sense of impassivity and lethargy, and the brushy effects of yore have solidified into tighter, more conventional modelling. Fischl seems intent on draining the female nude of the lushness and grace which it has traditionally been accorded in Western art. Through Oct. 22. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)



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Valeska Soares—This Brazilian artist has created a startling, evocative installation in one of the last outposts of cutting-edge art in the East Village. The floor of this sliver of a space is strewn with long-stemmed roses, and an elegant Romanesque niche made of beeswax has been set into the wall at the far end; in order to reach the desideratum, the visitor must crush the flowers underfoot. Much of the piece's interest, in the best tradition of installation art—reminiscent of the early days of Robert Morris and Yoko Ono—lies in the visitors' reactions. Some step carefully, trying to avoid the flowers; others trample over them mercilessly; a few sensitive souls refuse to approach. As installation art gets ever more bloated and fussy, cramming as much stuff as possible into the available space, it is a real pleasure to see an artist make a bold statement and let it stand. Through Oct. 1. (Information, 411 E. 9th St. Tuesdays through Saturdays, noon to 7.)

Doug Aitken—An installation consisting of digitally created photographic images, a sound piece, and two videos, in which the artist has juxtaposed media images with personal narrative elements. Through Oct. 15. (303 Gallery, 89 Greene St.)

Louise Bourgeois—An installation of two rooms. Through Dec. 15. (A complementary show of the artist's prints is at the Museum of Modern Art.) (Blum, 99 Wooster St.)

John Chamberlain—Eleven new painted-steel sculptures made from van tops. Through Oct. 15. (Pace, 142 Greene St.)

Nancy Grossman—"Fire Fields," a series of abstract collage drawings based on the artist's recent observations of the active volcanoes in Hawaii. Through Oct. 15. (Ledisflam, 130 Prince St.)

Luigi Ontani—Allegorical photographic self-portraits, from the seventies and the present. Through Oct. 22. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

Lari Pittman—Idiosyncratic paintings with complex overlays of images and words. Through Oct. 29. (Gorney Modern, 100 Greene St.)

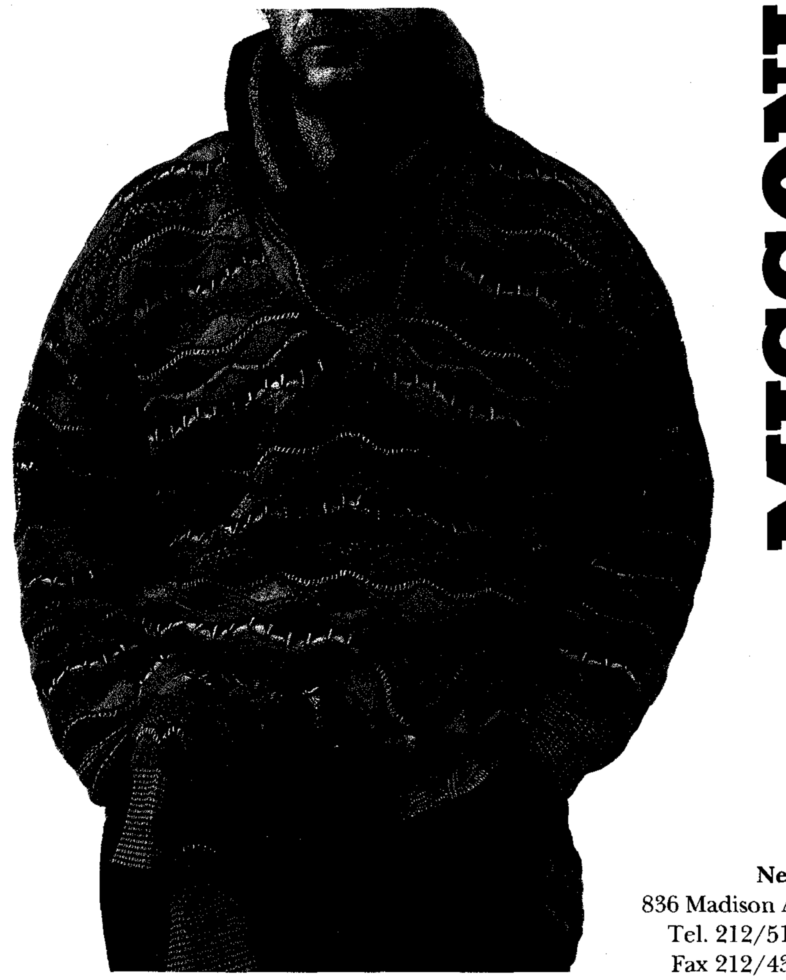
Miriam Schapiro—Paintings incorporating pieces of fabric from the artist's "Collaboration Series 1994: Mother Russia." In this show, Schapiro's "collaborators" are such women of the Soviet avant-garde as Varvara Stepanova, Lyubov Popova, and Natalya Goncharova. Schapiro is one of the original pattern-and-decoration artists of the seventies, and she remains true to the luxuriant craft aesthetic and implicitly feminist consciousness of that movement. Through Oct. 15. (Steinbaum Krauss, 132 Greene St.)

Sandy Skoglund—Two years ago at Borden, this enfant terrible showed three installations using mannequins and related photographs of real people, as well as smoked bacon, Cheez Doodles, and raisins. In her new piece, "The Wedding," the floors and ceiling are covered with strawberry jam and orange marmalade, and a pair of motorized mannequins play the bride and groom. Through Oct. 29. (Borden, 560 Broadway.)

Rosemarie Trockel—An installation of sculptures referring to the artist's personal art history, plus a video. Through Oct. 15. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

Franz West—An installation titled "Home Elements (A Retrospective)," which includes sculpture, furniture, and works on paper and invites viewer interaction. Through Oct. 22. (Zwirner, 43 Greene St.)

"The Bridge Show"—The inaugural show at this gallery includes new paintings by young British and American artists. Angela Gill's "Formulating, Fading" depicts a monumental male and female nude in Sistine Chapel-ceiling style. Ian Phillips's "Knights Errants" is a surrealistic, dark, and haunting portrait of a shrouded figure on a wooden bull. In an untitled painting, Jonathan Green plays a crude and funny game with letters superimposed on a classic still-life and an ugly pock-faced figure with a nimbus. Through Nov. 16. (Lannon, 530 W. 22nd St. Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)



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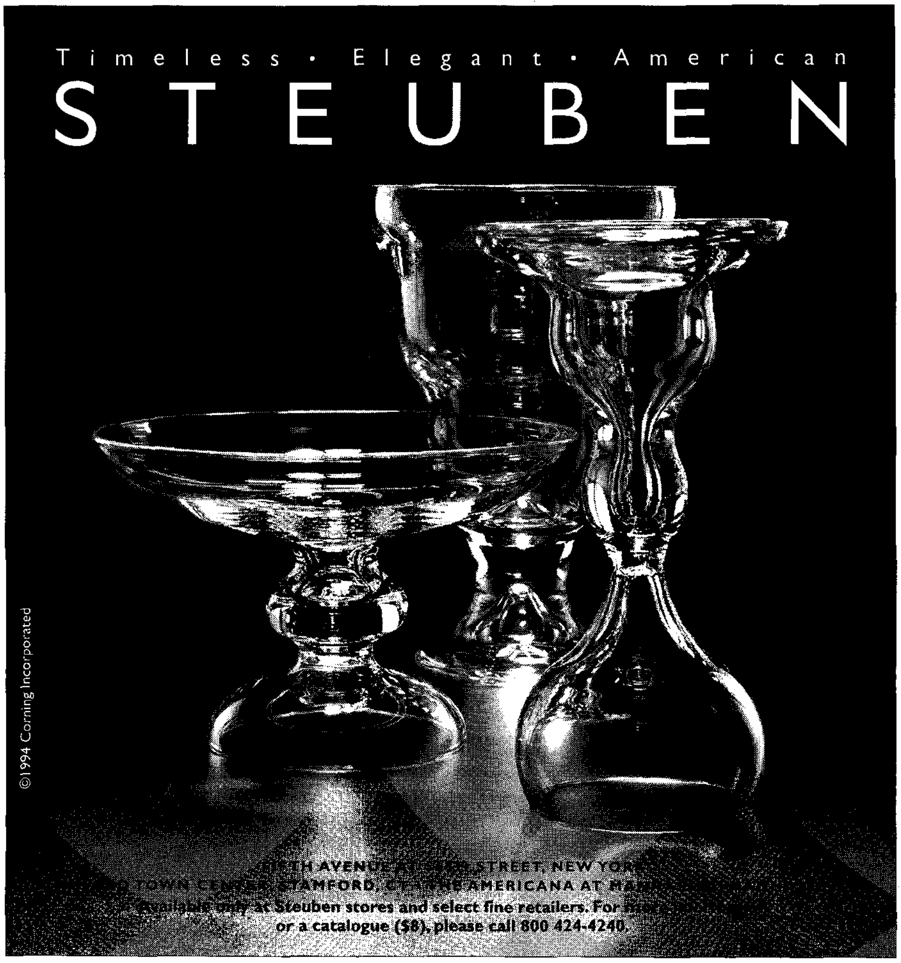

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ART—Cont'd

"Let the Artist Live!"—An experimental exhibition of habitat installations. Fifteen artists from the United States and abroad have been given areas in the gallery to live and work in, engaging the public in the process. Through Oct. 22. (Exit Art, 548 Broadway. Open Tuesdays through Thursdays until 8, and Fridays and Saturdays until 10.)

ANTIQUES

Wendfall—The first show of the season presented by Wendy Management includes more than a hundred dealers offering a spectrum of antiques spanning twenty-five hundred years. The fare includes an eighteenth-century Hepplewhite sofa ($12,000); a New York City mahogany Sheraton chest, circa 1820, attributed to Michael Allison ($4,000); and an eighteenth-century English tall-case clock with a large central second hand ($12,000). (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Sept. 21 from 4 to 9, Sept. 22-24 from noon to 9, and Sept. 25 from noon to 6. Tickets at the door on the days of the show.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Bill Brandt—Studies of English society and abstract female nudes. Through Oct. 29. (Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

Henri Cartier-Bresson—Photographs of Paris, from 1930 to 1980, by the French master. Through Oct. 22. (Danziger, 130 Prince St.)

Regina De Luise—Rich exotic landscapes and nudes. Through Oct. 15. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St.)

Leonard Freed—Black-and-white photographs from 1950 to 1970. Though Oct. 22. (Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St.)

Leslie Gill (1908-58)—Images by a photographer best known for his work with *Harper's Bazaar.* Through Oct. 22. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

Janine Niepce—Black-and-white photographs of French country life, taken primarily in the fifties and sixties. Through Oct. 22. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway.)

Gordon Parks—Recent still-life and abstract images by a photographer best known for his work for *Life* and the Farm Securities Administration. Through Oct. 22. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

August Sander (1876-1964)—Sixty photographs of life in the Weimar Republic. Through Oct. 8. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

John Szarkowski—Work from 1948 to 1962, by the former director of MOMA's photography department. Through Oct. 22. (Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

Eugene Von Bruenchenhein (1910-83)—Obsessive, erotic photographs by an outsider artist from Milwaukee. Through Oct. 15. (Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St.)

Georgi Zelma—Vintage images of Central Asia, by the Russian photographer. Through Oct. 29. (Schickler, 52 E. 76th St.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave. at 94th St.—A retrospective of the work of Cornell Capa, featuring images from *Life* and other magazines. . . . ¶ Forty images of contemporary Russian life, by Hans-Jürgen Burkhard. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"Talking Pictures," an exhibition that features images by more than fifty people not generally associated with photography—Mario Cuomo, Jessie Jackson, Diane Keaton—and taped commentaries on the work. . . . ¶ Photographs by Arthur Rothstein, who is best known for his work with *Look.* . . . ¶ More than thirty black-and-white photographs of Appalachian Kentuckians, by Shelby Lee Adams. Opens Sept. 24. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

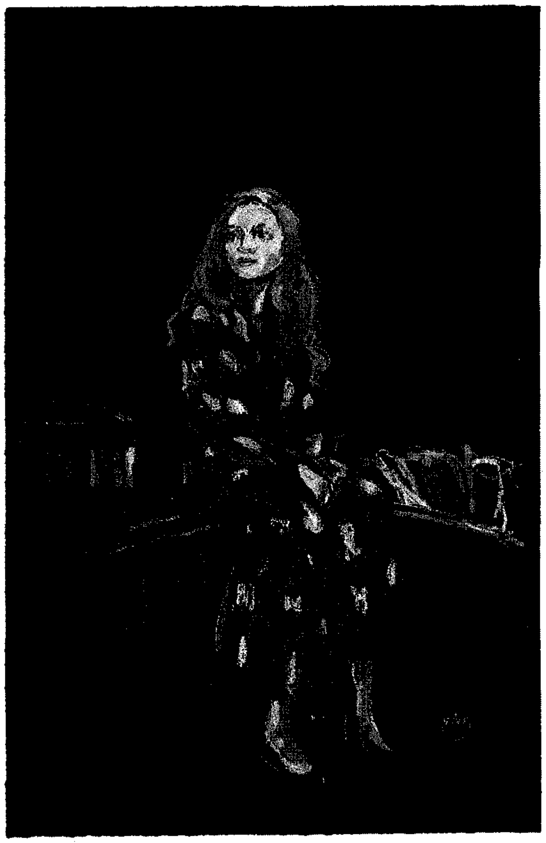
(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, Goethe House, and the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Mix 'n' Match

"Cavalleria Rusticana" and "Pagliacci" are so well established as the Siamese twins of opera that the Metropolitan Opera's opening-night bill of "Pagliacci" and Puccini's "Il Tabarro" comes as something of a shock. The aberration won't last long, though. After only two "Tab and Pag" evenings, the company will revert to the time-honored "Cav and Pag" configuration. The classic pairing makes historical sense: Mascagni's one-act "Cav," with its new verismo style, enjoyed terrific success when it was premièred, in 1890, and two years later Leoncavallo tailored "Pag" expressly to ride on its coattails.

Though "Cav" and "Pag" wasted little time getting hitched up, their couplings were far from exclusive, at least early on. "Pag" had already graced the Met's stage for two seasons—once on a bill with Gluck's "Orfeo," once with Massenet's "La Navarraise"—before hooking up with "Cav," in 1900. Not a single season passed without a "Pag" at the Met from then until 1939-40, but during those four decades the opera proved nearly as promiscuous as the circus characters it depicts. A roster of its double-bill bedfellows reveals a surprising assortment: "Don Pasquale," "La Fille du Régiment," "L'Elisir d'Amore," "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," "Hänsel und Gretel," Puccini's "Le Villi," Victor Herbert's "Madeline," Franco Leoni's "L'Oracolo," Italo Montemezzi's "La Notte di Zoraima," Louis Gruenberg's "The Emperor Jones," and even "Salomé." "Il Tabarro" would seem more compatible than most, mirroring "Pag"'s depiction of the savage brutality that awaits both the unfaithful spouse and the interloping suitor. But no matter how well the two operas fit together, after all these years "Pag" won't stray from "Cav" for long.



Teresa Stratas in "Il Tabarro."

WENDY WILSON

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera is 362-6000, and for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—Opening performances of the season, which continues through April 22. High-octane casts performing a double bill of **il tabarro** (with Teresa Stratas, Plácido Domingo, and Juan Pons; conducted by James Levine) and **pagliacci** (with Ms. Stratas, Luciano Pavarotti, Mr. Pons, and Dwayne Croft; Mr. Levine). (Sept. 26 at 6:30.) . . . **la bohème,** with Angela Gheorghiu, Diana Soviero, Richard Leech, and Timothy Noble; Michelangelo Veltri. (Sept. 27 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

New York City Opera—lakmé, with Elizabeth Futral, Julia Anne Wolf, Richard Drews, Ron Baker, and Joseph Corteggiano; conducted by Scott Bergeson. (Sept. 21 and Sept. 27 at 8.) . . . **tosca,** with Eva Zseller, Vincenzo Scuderi, and Harry Dworchak; Christopher Keene. (Sept. 22 at 8.) . . . **prince igor,** with Oksana Krovytska, Valery Alexeyev, and Vladimir Grishko; Guido Ajmone-Marsan. (Sept. 23 at 8.) . . . **carmen,** with Robynne Redmon, Patricia Johnson, Allan Glassman, and Mark Delavan; Semyon Vekshtein. (Sept. 24 at 1:30.) . . . **the magic flute,** sung in English, with Amy Burton, Mary Dunleavy, Benjamin Butterfield, Jeff Mattsey, and James Patterson; Mr. Bergeson. (Sept. 24 at 8.) . . . **madama butterfly,** with Maryanne Telese, Ellen Rabiner, Stephen Mark Brown, and Robert Perry; conducted by Mr. Ajmone-Marsan. (Sept. 25 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

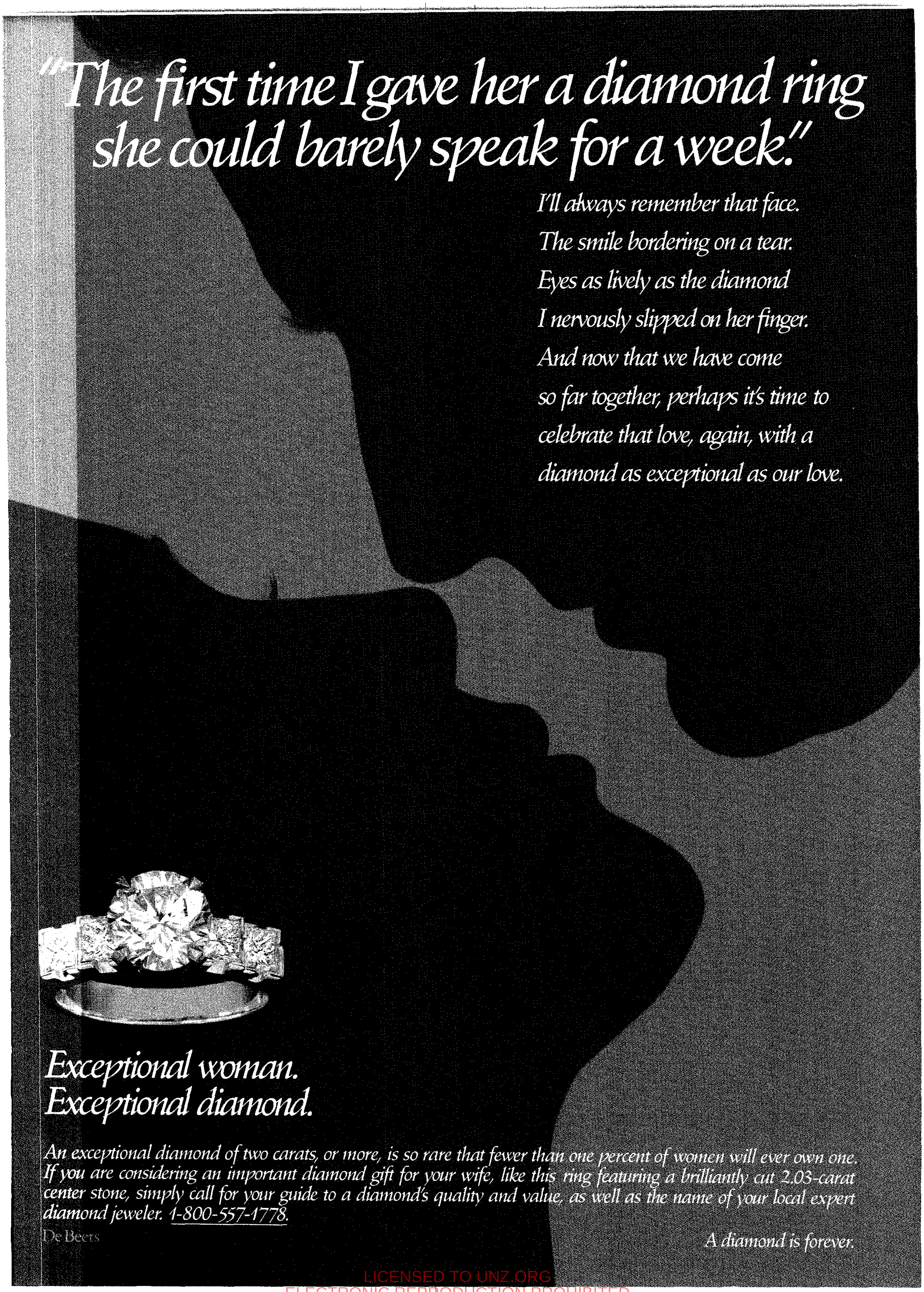
Oxford Early Opera—A British troupe of young professionals, in a semi-staged version of Handel's "Agrippina." (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. Sept. 21 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

Amato Opera Company—Presenting "La Bohème." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Sept. 24 at 7:30 and Sept. 25 at 2:30.)

American Symphony Orchestra—Leon Botstein directs concert performances of Bizet's "Djamileh" (a one-act comic opera composed in 1871) and highlights from Offenbach's "La Vie Parisienne." The casts include soprano Carmen Balthrop, tenors Jean-Luc Viala and John Horton Murray, bass-baritone Jan Opalach, and actor Tony Randall (who will narrate in the Offenbach). (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Sept. 25 at 3.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Kurt Masur conducts the opening concerts of the orchestra's hundred-and-fifty-second season. Sept. 21 at 7:30: Weber's "Oberon" Overture, Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra, and, with soloist Yo-Yo Ma, Boccherini's Cello Concerto in B-Flat Major and Tchaikovsky's "Rococo Variations." . . ¶ Sept. 22



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SOME PEOPLE

Written and Performed by Danny Hoch. Directed by Jo Bonney. October 18 - November 13. (In repertory with "The Diva is Dismissed"). Obie-winning solo artist Danny Hoch is your host for a meet-and-greet with some people you'll never forget. $15*

THE DIVA IS DISMISSED

Written and Performed by Jenifer Lewis. Directed by Charles Randolph-Wright. October 27 - November 13 (In repertory with "Some People"). Triple-threat performer Jenifer Lewis takes us on a raucous, raunchy and heart-rending journey through her life and times. $15*

SIMPATICO

Written and Directed by Sam Shepard. Starts November 1. Sam Shepard returns to The Public with a high-stakes look at the daily-double-dealings of two backstabbing businessmen. $35*

THE PETRIFIED PRINCE

A New Musical. Book by Edward Gallardo. Music & Lyrics by Michael John LaChiusa. Directed by Harold Prince. Choreographed by Rob Marshall. *Starts December 6. A ribald new musical from* an original screenplay by Ingmar Bergman. $35*

HIM

By Christopher Walken. Directed by Jim Simpson. Starts Dec. 6. ELVIS! *Alive and well — and living in Limbo.* Christopher Walken wrote it, and he'll lead the cast as HIM. $25*

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

By William Shakespeare. Directed by Barry Edelstein. *Starts January 17. The New York Shakespeare Festival* celebrates its 40th Anniversary, as Tony-winner Ron Leibman ("Angels in America") exacts a pound of flesh, and the Shakespeare Marathon continues. $35*

A LANGUAGE OF THEIR OWN

By Chay Yew. January. Young, Asian, gay. Lovers become ex-lovers become enemies become friends, in this painfully funny work by a gifted new writer. $25*

SILENCE, CUNNING, EXILE

By Stuart Greenman. Directed by Mark Wing-Davey. February. America, circa 1955. *Ike is in. Intellectuals are out.* A play suggested by the life of Diane Arbus. $25*

DANCING ON MOONLIGHT

By Keith Glover. March. 20th-century Greek tragedy á la Chester Himes. $25*

DOG OPERA

By Constance Congdon. Directed by Gerald Gutierrez. April. They'd *probably be married...if one of them weren't gay.* Two people desperate to find in a lover what they've already found in each other. A contemporary comedy about life, love and loneliness in the '90s. $25*

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CLASSICAL MUSIC–Cont'd

and Sept. 24 at 8, Sept. 23 at 11 A.M., and Sept. 27 at 7:30: Weber's "Oberon" Overture, Schubert's Symphony No. 2, and Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030.)

Staatskapelle Weimar—Hans-Peter Frank conducting. Sept. 22 at 7:30: Brahms' Symphony No. 1 and Wagner's "Tannhäuser" Overture and "Wesendonck" Lieder (with soprano Christine Hansmann). . . . ¶ Sept. 23 at 8: Humperdinck's Prelude to "Hänsel und Gretel," Strauss's "Don Juan," and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 10. . . . ¶ Sept. 24 at 8: Liszt's A-Major Piano Concerto (featuring Leon Bates), Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4, and Wagner's Prelude to "Die Meistersinger." (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448.)

Orchestra of St. Luke's—Yoav Talmi conducts a benefit concert that includes overtures by Verdi (to "La Forza del Destino") and Beethoven (his "Leonore" Overture No. 3), Donizetti and Puccini arias (sung by soprano Roberta Peters), Grieg's Piano Concerto (with Dudley Moore), and Beethoven's Triple Concerto (with violinist Joshua Bell, cellist Steven Isserlis, and Mr. Moore). (Carnegie Hall. Sept. 24 at 8.)

City Island Baroque Ensemble—Flutist Diane Hoff is featured in Bach's B-Minor Orchestral Suite and a Vivaldi piccolo concerto; Hanne-berit Hahnemann is the soloist in a Vivaldi violin concerto. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. Sept. 25 at noon.)

New York Madrigal Singers—Erik-Peter Mortensen directs Renaissance choral works, by Hernando Franco, Francisco Guerrero, Palestrina, Luca Marenzio, Jacques Arcadelt, and Salamone Rossi. (St. Luke In-the-Fields, 487 Hudson St., at Grove St. Sept. 26 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

RECITALS

Kosciuszko Kickoff—Opening musical events of the season in the second-floor salon of New York's center for Polish culture. Sept. 21 at 7: Pianist Krystof Jablonski performs Chopin's four Scherzos and Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition." . . . ¶ Sept. 25 at 2:45: The Warsaw-based Camerata String Quartet performs quartets by Haydn (in D Minor, Op. 76, No. 2), Schubert ("Death and the Maiden"), and Szymanowski (his First). . . . ¶ Sept. 27 at 7: A lecture on Szymanowski by Polish musicologist Malgorzata Komorowska. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130.)

Cosmopolitan Chamber Ensemble—Performing Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" (featuring violinist Eric Grossman) and Tchaikovsky's string sextet "Souvenir de Florence." (Stuyvesant High School, 345 Chambers St. Sept. 22 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.)

Beethoven Piano Sonatas—Concluding concerts of a series in which all thirty-two of Beethoven's piano sonatas are performed on period instruments (or replicas thereof). Sept. 22 at 6:45: A lecture by James Webster. . . . ¶ Sept. 22 at 8: The Sonatas in E Major (Op. 14, No. 1, with Bart van Oort), G Major (Op. 14, No. 2, with Ursula Duetschler), C Minor (Op. 13, the "Pathétique," with Tom Beghin), and E-Flat Major (Op. 7, with Malcolm Bilson). . . . ¶ Sept. 24 at 8:30: The Sonatas in A-Flat Major (Op. 26, with Andrew Willis), C Minor (Op. 10, No. 1, with Mr. van Oort), F Major (Op. 10, No. 2, with Ms. Duetschler), and D Major (Op. 10, No. 3, with Mr. Bilson). . . . ¶ Sept. 25 at 4: The Sonatas in G Major (Op. 49, No. 2, with Mr. Willis), G Major (Op. 31, No. 1, with Ms. Duetschler), D Minor (Op. 31, No. 2, the "Tempest," with Mr. Bilson), and E-Flat Major (Op. 31, No. 3, with Zvi Meniker). . . . ¶ Sept. 25 at 6:45: A lecture by George Barth. . . . ¶ Sept. 25 at 8: The Sonatas in E-Flat Major (Op. 81a, "Les Adieux," with Mr. van Oort), E Major (Op. 109, with Mr. Bilson), A-Flat Major (Op. 110, with David Breitman), and C Minor (Op. 111, with Mr. Beghin). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719.)

Bargemusic—Presenting Mozart's C-Major Piano Trio (K. 548), Brahms' Viola Sonata No. 2, and Fauré's C-Minor Piano Quartet; with violinist Ivan Chan, violist Paul Coletti, cellist Christopher Costanza, and pianist Joseph Villa. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Sept. 22 at 7:30 and Sept. 25 at 4.)

Jarmila Novotná Tribute—Musicians of several generations gather to remember the late Czech soprano, who died in February, with videos, recordings, performances (by sopranos Anna Moffo and Janet Norway, mezzo-soprano Melissa Bybee, and others) of works from Novotná's repertoire (such as "Der Rosenkavalier," "Le Nozze di Figaro," and "Rusalka"), and piano performances by Michel Singher, Cornelius Dufallo, and Francis Heilbut. (Middle Collegiate Church, 50 E. 7th St., at Second Ave. Sept. 23 at 7:30. A benefit concert. For information about tickets, call 866-2086.)

Camera Concerts—Programs featuring performers affiliated with Concert Artists Guild's San Juan Islands Chamber Music Festival, which takes place during the summer in several island communities in Washington's Puget Sound. Sept. 23 at 8: Handel's "German Arias"; songs by David Sanford, Ives, Ellington, and Britten; duo-piano music by Stravinsky; and Mozart's Piano Quartet in E-Flat Major. . . . ¶ Sept. 24 at 8: A recent work by Mr. Sanford, trios by Haydn and Mendelssohn (his C-Minor Piano Trio), François de Fossa's Third Guitar Quartet, and Bartók's "Contrasts." . . . ¶ Sept. 25 at 3: Vocal and instrumental chamber works by Mr. Sanford, Astor Piazzolla, Vivaldi, Milhaud, Spohr, and Fauré (his C-Minor Piano Quartet). (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.)

Pacific Serenades—A chamber group made up of several well-established West Coast orchestral players, including clarinettist Gary Gray. Their program comprises Brahms' Clarinet Quintet, Robert Aldridge's "Three Folk Songs," and Mark Carlson's Piano Quartet. (Weill Recital Hall. Sept. 24 at 8:30.)

New Juilliard Ensemble—Performing premières of works by Betty Olivero and Miguel del Aguila, as well as pieces by Faradzh Karayev and Zygmunt Krauze. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Sept. 25 at 2. For information about tickets, call 769-7406.)

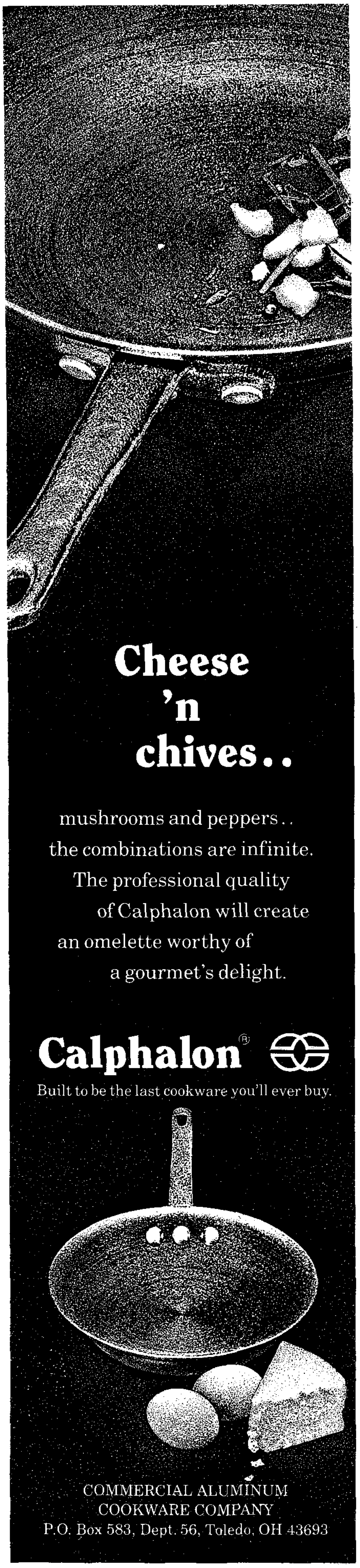
Patrice Michaels Bedi—The soprano, whose recent lieder recording (on the Cedille label) suggests a formidable interpretative talent, makes her New York début with a recital of unusual breadth, singing one song by each of twenty-five composers; with pianist Deborah Sobol. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Sept. 25 at 3.)

Samuel Bartos—The pianist performs Bach's "Goldberg" Variations and several shorter works by Chopin. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Sept. 25 at 6 and 8. Admission is free, but call 876-6000 to reserve a seat.)

Eugenia Zukerman and Anthony Newman—The flutist and the harpsichordist offer readings of literary documents and performances of music from eighteenth-century Paris, including works by Rameau, Couperin, and Jacques Duphly. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. Sept. 27 at 6. For information about tickets, call 930-0571.)

Meridian String Quartet—A casual concert spotlighting Haydn's Quartet in B-Flat Major (Op. 76, No. 4). (Turtle Bay Music School, 244 E. 52nd St. 753-8811. Sept. 27 at 7:30.)

"A Body Is a Nice Place to Be"—A program of new theatrical chamber-music works by the high-spirited composer and performance artist Gerald Busby, including "Open Here," for vocal trio; "A Boy Is a Boy Is a," for tenor and viola; and, to cap off the evening, "Body Ode: A Madrigal," for three singers and a glass-eater. Performers include mezzo-soprano Joyce Castle, tenor Steven Goldstein, baritone Richard Byrne, violist Scott Slapi, glass-eater Todd Robbins, and Craig Rutenberg and Mr. Busby (both pianists). (Weill Recital Hall. Sept. 27 at 8.)



SPORTS

Polo Notes

THE 1994 U.S. Open Tennis Championship may be history, but the U.S. Open Polo Championship is still under way in Bethpage, Long Island. For all it evokes, polo isn't a game many people have ever seen, much less followed avidly; most of us are more familiar with its imagery than with the sport itself. A recent visit to the Bethpage grounds inspired the following observations:

—Despite its élite reputation, polo is a sport you can quickly become an expert at. People who had clearly never been near a polo stick were confidently assessing the ponies and talking about chukkers and "riding off the line."

—The horses, most of them highly trained thoroughbreds, put on an exquisite performance.

—With binoculars (which are recommended) you can ogle the idle rich in the tent on the "box seat" side. (For viewing purposes, the difference between the bleachers and the pricier seats is negligible; everyone gets basically the same view of the field.) As the finals approach, there are rumors that members of the British Royal Family may join "a *Who's Who* of American corporate and social royalty" among the spectators. Look for Billy Crystal and Billy Joel, and maybe Alec and Billy Baldwin.

—The quaint halftime ritual of pressing divots back into place on the field with the high-society types turns out to be a lot of fun.

—Long Island has a long and distinguished polo history. The Bethpage fields were built as a W.P.A. project in 1936, when Long Island was a hotbed of polo activity, with nearly thirty clubs and more than two dozen private polo grounds. The U.S. Open has returned here for the first time in forty years.

Since the baseball season is kaput, why not expand your horizons? The final rounds of the polo championship take place this week. (Bethpage State Park Polo Grounds. September 21 and September *24-25* at *3*. For tickets, call *307-7171.)*

FOOTBALL

GIANTS—Off until Oct. 2, when they'll face the New Orleans Saints.

JETS—Vs. the Chicago Bears, Sept. 25 at 8.

(The Giants and the Jets play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands, 1-201 935-8111.)

FOR KIDS

(A list of activities for children and their parents or other adults.)

PICTURE THIS—The Lefferts Homestead Children's Museum in Prospect Park is currently featuring an exhibit of works by fourteen children's-book illustrators, several of whom will lead art workshops on Sept. 24-25 at 2 and 3:30, and Sept. 26 at 2. (Prospect Park's Willink entrance, Flatbush Ave. near Empire Blvd., Brooklyn. Call 1-718 965-6505 for additional information.) . . . ¶ "An Artist's View of Childhood: An Ezra Jack Keats Retrospective" highlights the career of the author and illustrator of "The Snowy Day" and "Whistle for Willie," among other books, at the Donnell Library Center, through Oct. 14. (20 W. 53rd St. Open daily, except Sundays, from 12:30 to 5:30.)

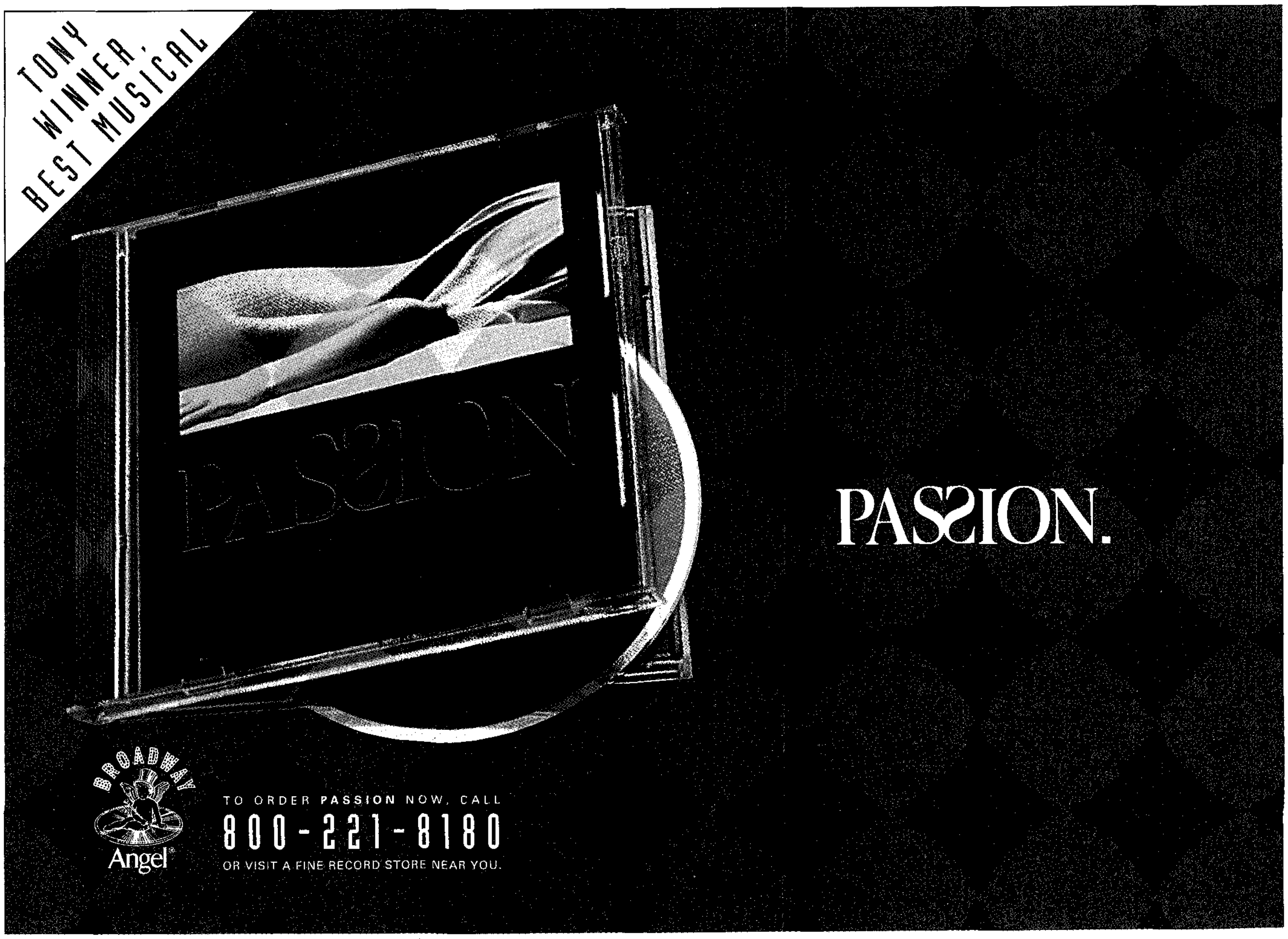
ON THE AIR—Kids can reënact and record vintage radio programs in a Saturday-morning series at the Museum of Television & Radio, through December; participants later get a tape of the show they recorded. On Sept. 24, a Buck Rogers-style action program is on the bill. Recommended ages: eight to thirteen. (25 W. 52nd St. 621-6600. Saturdays at 10.)

PERSONAL PAPERS—Make your own stationery from recycled office paper, at the Children's Museum of Manhattan. Recommended ages: five and older. (212 W. 83rd St. 721-1234. Sept. 25 at 11 and noon.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

THE GREAT WHITE FLEA—Think you'd make a good night-clubber in "Guys and Dolls"? The annual Broadway Flea Market, on Sept. 24, from 10 to 7:30, will feature autograph booths, memorabilia, and, beginning at 5, the Grand Auction, where visitors can bid on one-night walk-on roles, among other items on the docket. (Shubert Alley, west of Broadway, between 44th and 45th Sts. No tickets necessary.)

FAIRE THEE WELL—Tune up your lute and polish your armor for the annual Medieval Festival, at the Cloisters, in Fort Tryon Park, featuring music and dance of the Middle Ages. Two knights on horseback will square off in a joust to conclude the festivities. (Sept. 25, from noon to 6. No tickets necessary.)



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Grow and Show—The Garden Craft Fair will present artisans whose work either incorporates botanical elements or is made from natural material. On display will be pressed-earth planters and clocks in the shape of vegetables. (New York Botanical Garden, Bronx Park. Sept. 24-25, from 10 to 5. Admission by contribution.)

Retro Metro—Veniero's Pasticceria & Café will celebrate its hundreth birthday with horse-drawn carriages, pushcarts, and period costumes. (E. 11th St. between First and Second Aves. Sept. 23, from 11 to 4, and Sept. 23, from noon to 3. No tickets necessary.)

You Ain't Nothin' But a Greyhound—Retired racetrack greyhounds and their owners—and admirers—will gather in Riverside Park near the Boat Basin on Sept. 25, from 11 to 4. Visitors can learn about the dogs and, beginning at noon, watch the administering of the American Kennel Club Canine Good Citizen Test. (Riverside Dr., at 78th St. No tickets necessary.)

Wordstock—The Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival, the largest such gathering on the continent, will offer forty-one hours of readings, panel discussions, workshops, and storytelling. Jimmy Santiago Baca, Mary Oliver, Adrienne Rich, Gary Snyder, and others will be there. (Waterloo Village, Stanhope, N.J. Sept. 22-23, from 8:30 A.M. to 10 P.M., and Sept. 24, from 8 A.M. to 10 P.M. For more information, call 1-201 540-8443, ext. 129.)

Talk Amongst Yourselves—The Museum of African American History and Arts is presenting a conference on black women in theatre and film. (Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. Sept. 21-26. For schedule information, call 749-5298. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ New York University will sponsor a conference on Freud's wolfman. (Sept. 23-24. For schedule and locations, call 998-8848. No tickets necessary.)

New South Africa—Native crafts, dance, and music will be part of the South African Arts and Crafts Market in Grand Central Terminal, Sept. 21-24, from 10 to 7. The main waiting room will house the marketplace, which will include art work, textiles, and handmade clothing. From noon to 2, South African musicians and dancers will entertain in the main lobby.

Mangia Mania—The annual feast of San Gennaro honors the patron saint of Naples. Look for the usual festival amenities—sausage heroes, zeppole, and cotton candy—and listen for traditional Italian music. (Mulberry St. between Prince and Canal Sts. Daily, from 11 A.M. to 11:30 P.M. Through Sept. 25.)

Readings—Sept. 21 at 7:30: Robert McDowell and Louis Simpson will read from their own poetry. (Barnes & Noble, Sixth Ave. at 21st St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 22 at 8: Thomas Mallon and Joseph Olshan will read from their own fiction. (Dixon Place, 258 Bowery, near Houston St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ Sept. 25 at 5: Jeffrey Gustavson will read from his new collection of poetry, "Nervous Forces." (Biblio's, 317 Church St. Admission by contribution.) . . . ¶ Sept. 26 at 8: James Ellroy will read from his new novel, "American Tabloid." (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5690.) . . . ¶ Sept. 27 at 7: David Bowman and Kevin Canty will read from their own fiction. (Limbo, 47 Avenue A, at 4th St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—Sept. 21 at 6: Art D'Lugoff, founder of the recently defunct Village Gate nightclub, will be interviewed by *Post* columnist Jack Newfield. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.) . . . ¶ Sept. 26 at 1: Cecilia Bartoli will be interviewed by Matthew Gurewitsch, in the first part of a series, "Singers in Conversation." (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949.)

Walks & Tours—Sept. 25 at 11:30: The Morningside Heights Residents' Association will offer a benefit tour of the neighborhood, including Riverside Church and turn-of-the-century apartment buildings. Lunch and a lecture are included. For more information, call 932-2255. . . . ¶ Sept. 25 at 1: The 92nd Street Y will lead a tour of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. For more information, call 996-1100.

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THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

The Lost Words—The story of a depressed East Village songwriter (Michael Kaniecki) who decides to document his life with a video camera. The director, Scott Saunders, shot this feature on high-definition video, which was then transferred to film. Kaniecki and Saunders collaborated on the script with Dan Koeppel. Opening Sept. 21; Cinema Village.

Me and the Mob—A comedy about a down-on-his-luck journalist who joins the Mafia. With James Lorinz, Sandra Bullock, and Tony Darrow. Directed by Frank Rainone. Opening Sept. 23; Movieland 8th Street Triplex and Criterion Center.

My Fair Lady—The 1964 adaptation of Lerner and Loewe's musical, in a completely restored version. With Audrey Hepburn and Rex Harrison. Cecil Beaton designed the costumes and sets, and George Cukor directed. Opening Sept. 21; Ziegfeld.

The Shawshank Redemption—Tim Robbins and Morgan Freeman in a drama set in a maximum-security prison in Maine. Written and directed by Frank Darabont. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) Opening Sept. 23; Coronet.

Sleep with Me—Eric Stoltz and Meg Tilly are the lovers, but Craig Sheffer, the couple's best friend, loves Tilly, too. The romantic triangle unfolds in six acts, each section by a different author: Duane Dell'Amico, Roger Hedden, Neal Jimenez, Joe Keenan, Michael Steinberg, and Rory Kelly, who also directed. Opening Sept. 23; Village Theatre VII and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.

Terminal Velocity—A thriller starring Charlie Sheen as a skydiving instructor drawn into international intrigue when he discovers that a student (Nastassja Kinski) who apparently fell to her death is still alive. Written by David Twohy. Directed by Deran Serafian. Opening Sept. 23; Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema II, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1.

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre addresses and phone numbers are listed on page 44.)

The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert—Paragons of camp become campers, of sorts, in this cult-pleasing tale of a transsexual (Terence Stamp) and two drag queens (Hugo Weaving and Guy Pearce) who take a lip-synching act from Sydney to a resort in arid central Australia. Stephan Elliott, the writer-director, has one original idea—posing creatures of the night in wild sunbaked settings. As crossover drag sagas go, it's neither as robustly funny as "La Cage aux Folles" nor as lively and poetic as the best parts of "Outrageous!"—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, New York Twin, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Advocate—A black comedy set in medieval France. With Colin Firth as an idealistic lawyer and Amina Annabi as the owner of a homicidal pig. Also with Nicol Williamson and Lysette Anthony. Written and directed by Leslie Megahey. (Angelika Film Center and 68th St. Playhouse.)

À la Mode—A comedy set in the mid-sixties, about a teen-age orphan (Ken Higelin) and the Jewish tailor (Jean Yanne) who teaches him to make magic with his scissors. Directed by Rémy Duchemin, who wrote the screenplay with Richard Morgievo. In French. (Paris.)

Barcelona—The second film by the writer and director Whit Stillman ("Metropolitan") is a culture-clash comedy about a pair of conservative young Americans (played by Taylor Nichols and Chris Eigeman) in early-eighties Barcelona. Although the picture begins promisingly, its charm peters out fast. Every scene seems to make the same not very interesting point: that Americans get a bum rap from foreigners. Stillman's style is placid and a little smug—prematurely gray. In just two movies he has found the sort of rut that most filmmakers take decades to settle into. Also with Tushka Bergen and Mira Sorvino.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 8/15/94.) (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

Blue Sky—Tony Richardson's final film is a psychological drama set in the late fifties, starring Tommy Lee Jones as an Air Force nuclear engineer and Jessica Lange as his flamboyant wife. With Powers Boothe, Carrie Snodgress, Amy Locane, and Chris O'Donnell. Written by Rama Laurie Stagner, Arlene Sarner, and Jerry Leichtling. (19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Café au Lait—The début feature from Mathieu Kassovitz, a young French director trying very hard not to be the Jewish Spike Lee, and only just succeeding. Kassovitz plays Félix, an annoying young bike messenger—shades of "She's Gotta Have It." Further similarities are hardly dispelled by a heroine (the dreamy Julie Mauduech) who refuses to confine her charms to a single man. Félix has a rival for her affections, a wealthy black student (Hubert Kounde); after a raucous and unconvincing start, the movie settles down nicely into a good-natured love triangle. Kassovitz may yearn to be an Angry Young Man, but this film portends a traditional career in the comedy of the bourgeoisie. In French.—A.L. (9/12/94) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Ciao, Professore!—It's a baggy-pants comedy version of "Christ Stopped at Eboli," with Paolo Villaggio as an idealistic third-grade teacher from Northern Italy mistakenly assigned to the squalid Neapolitan village of Corzano. The conflicts he faces are played for guffaws as well as poignancy. The director, Lina Wertmüller, replaces the usual schoolhouse sanctimony with her salt-of-the-earth smugness. Many of the boys and girls are so unvaryingly "lively" you wish Villaggio would try to solve their problems by administering Ritalin. In Italian.—M.S. (Quad Cinema and 57th St. Playhouse.)

Clear and Present Danger—Further adventures of Jack Ryan (Harrison Ford), the courageous and incorruptible C.I.A. analyst who is the hero of Tom Clancy's ungainly novels. The director, Phillip Noyce, whose "Patriot Games" (1992) was a surprisingly elegant Clancy adaptation, has once again taken a tub of prose and sweated it into a sleek, classically proportioned suspense picture. Also with Henry Czerny, Willem Dafoe, Donald Moffat, James Earl Jones, and Anne Archer.—T.R. (8/15/94) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, East 85th Street, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

The Client—Joel Schumacher's thriller, based on a John Grisham best-seller, has a familiar chase-picture plot: innocent citizen stumbles on some incriminating information about the Mob, and runs like hell. The reluctant witness here is an eleven-year-old Memphis boy, Mark Sway (Brad Renfro), whose lawyer, Reggie Love (Susan Sarandon), acts as a sort of surrogate mother. This is safe-as-houses entertainment, directed with no particular finesse, but it's refreshingly straightforward and unpretentious. It's the first Grisham-based thriller that actually lowers itself to provide a thrill or two. Also with Tommy Lee Jones.—T.R. (8/1/94) (59th Street East Cinema, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Murray Hill Cinemas; through Sept. 22.)

Color of Night—This comic murder mystery about psychotherapists and their patients is the first movie that Richard Rush has directed since "The Stunt Man" (1980), and it gives the audience nearly as wild a ride. The film is terrifically enjoyable, but it's so unstable that it plays as parody—as the "Beat the Devil" of erotic thrillers. It's worth seeing for Rush's witty, imaginative visual conceits, and for the sensational supporting cast, which includes Rubén Blades, Lesley Ann Warren, and Brad Dourif. Bruce Willis and Jane March are the stars.—T.R. (9/5/94) (Olympia. . . . ¶ Embassy 1; through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ Embassy; starting Sept. 23.)

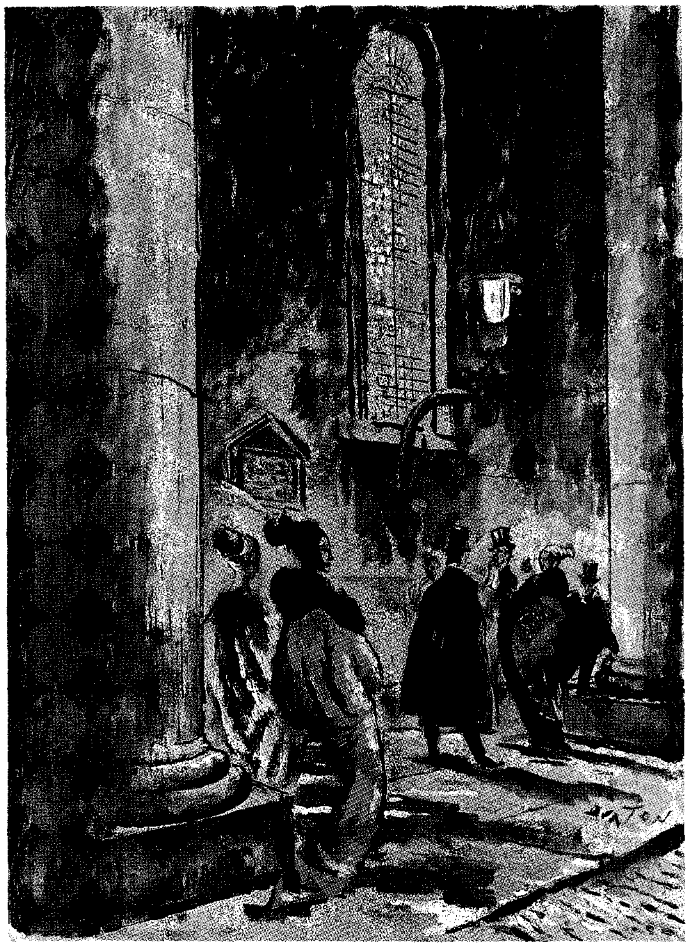
Corrina, Corrina—It's the fifties, and Ray Liotta is a widowed atheistic jingle writer searching for a housekeeper who can also play surrogate mommy for seven-year-old Tina Majorino. He lucks out with Whoopi Goldberg. She gives a varied, even jazzy performance as Ms. Wonderful. But the movie is hopelessly pedantic—chock-full of lessons about grief, racism, and, so help us, God. With Joan Cusack and Curtis Williams, Jr. Jessie Nelson produced, directed, and wrote the semi-autobiographical script.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Cinema 3rd Avenue, and 62nd & Broadway. . . . ¶ Criterion Center; through Sept. 22.)

December Bride—In a turn-of-the-century Irish village, a young unmarried woman (Saskia Reeves) defies propriety by living with and bearing the children of two brothers (Donal McCann and Ciaran Hinds). Based on the 1951 novel by Sam Hanna Bell. Directed by Thaddeus O'Sullivan. (Quad Cinema.)

Eat Drink Man Woman—Another film comedy from Ang Lee, the director of "The Wedding Banquet." The aging Mr. Chu (Sihung Lung) is a widowed chef, living in Taipei with his three daughters, each of whom is getting itchy for the world beyond. (Watch out for the exquisite Chien-Lien Wu as Jia-Chien, the pushiest of the three.) Mr. Chu is a King Lear of the kitchen: a master on his own ground, slapping fish around and blowing air into a boiled duck, but gradually losing his sense of taste and his power to rule. The movie is more likable than memorable; you come out running for the nearest restaurant. In Mandarin.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Forrest Gump—As all the world now knows, Tom Hanks plays Forrest Gump, a simple Alabama soul who serves his country without hurting a fly; he saves his comrades in Vietnam, woos the dippy Jenny (Robin Wright), and runs back and forth across the continent. Hanks does his best to convince us that Gump is, in fact, a character, and not merely a bulging sack of virtues, but the movie takes the fight out of him. With Sally Field and Gary Sinise. Directed by Robert Zemeckis.—A.L. (7/25/94) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Baronet, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Coronet and Guild; through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ Embassy; starting Sept. 23.)

Fresh—A grim tale of New York youth fouled up in the drug trade. Fresh (Sean Nelson) runs heroin, plays truant, and annoys his family; finally, inspired by chess moves learned from his no-good father (Samuel L. Jackson), he turns the tables on two local dealers. Apart from one breathtaking spasm of violence at a basketball game, Boaz Yakin's first film is dulled by its own earnestness; it makes its big point about the moral limbo of these lives, then keeps on making it. Furious, but no fun.—A.L. (9/12/94) (Manhattan Twin, 86th Street East Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Village Theatre VII; through Sept. 22.)



One of Cecil Beaton's design sketches for "My Fair Lady," opening September 21 at the Ziegfeld.

A Good Man in Africa—William Boyd's comic novel about a snake's progress in Africa has become flat, shaky, and sentimental in the hands of the usually capable Bruce Beresford (who directed and co-produced) and Boyd himself (who co-produced and wrote the script). They forgot to establish and sustain a satirical attack; the result is a low farce of postcolonial British incompetence. Colin Friels, as the antihero, a diplomatic hack, is no Peter Sellers or Alec Guinness, and gifted castmates such as Diana Rigg and John Lithgow break through their predictable caricatures only fleetingly. Sean Connery blows them all away as a virtuous doctor, but even Connery's performance is half there—he should be more self-righteous.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Cinema II; through Sept. 22.)

In the Land of the Deaf—A French documentary about communication and culture among the deaf. Directed by Nicolas Philibert. (Film Forum.)

It Could Happen to You—The main characters in Andrew Bergman's sweet-spirited romantic farce are a cop named Charlie (Nicolas Cage) and a diner waitress named Yvonne (Bridget Fonda)—a pair of generous, honest, kind-hearted working-class lovers who might have seemed too good to be true even in one of Frank Capra's sunny populist comedies. Rosie Perez, as Charlie's beady-eyed, greedy wife, gets most of the big laughs, but it's the relationship between the cop and the waitress that gives the picture its distinctive comic spirit.—T.R. (8/1/94) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex and Cinema 3.)

Killing Zoe—The first-time director is Roger Avary, one of a new breed of filmmakers who appear to conceive of cinema as a superior form of abattoir. (He co-wrote "True Romance" and "Pulp Fiction.") Eric Stoltz plays a safe-breaker who comes to Paris to see an old friend, Eric (Jean-Hugues Anglade). Together with their band of merry men (the merriment is all heroin and liquor), they try to rob a bank and foul it up. From time to time—during the opening credits, or at the start of the raid—the movie kicks into life, with traces of Godard in its hectic insouciance. But this eagerness to find a style has nothing to launch from—no obsessions, no arguments, no strong feelings, just a vague desire to rub our noses in the dirt. Also starring Julie Delpy as a whore with—of course—a heart of gold.—A.L. (8/22-29/94) (Angelika Film Center.)

Latcho Drom—A nonfiction exploration and celebration of Gypsy culture, with an emphasis on traditional Rom (Gypsy) song, music, and dance. Filmed in India, Egypt, Turkey, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, France, and Spain. Directed and written by Tony Gatlif. In Romany. (Quad Cinema.)

Making Up! and **The Coriolis Effect**—Two short films. "Making Up," a one-hour romantic comedy by the German director Katja von Garnier. Louis Venosta's half-hour film "The Coriolis Effect" is a chronicle of bad weather and complicated love lives involving two tornado chasers. (Quad Cinema and Angelika 57.)

The Mask—Genial goonery. Jim Carrey stars as a sweet loser who gets an id tune-up when he puts on a super-powered Norse mask and becomes a zoot-suited jolly green giant. Since Carrey looks as if he were made of Play-Doh anyway, the computer animation that allows him to bounce and gyrate appears to spring from his own pliable core. The funniest moment comes when Carrey mimes the effects of the mask *without* special effects. With Max as Milo the plucky terrier. Directed by Charles Russell.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Sutton, and Criterion Center.)

Milk Money—Melanie Griffith and Ed Harris star in this romantic comedy about a kind-hearted city hooker and a small-town widower whose son decides to play matchmaker. With Michael Patrick Carter, Malcolm McDowell, and Casey Siemaszko.

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CHANNEL SURFING

ALTHOUGH Norman Mailer once did a phenomenological analysis of the T-formation versus the single wing (in "Advertisements for Myself"), football has never carried the intellectual cachet of baseball. The game is too sporadic and behemoth to inspire poetic tribute. It's a sport for ruffians. In Ken Burns's PBS epic "Baseball," for example, football is dismissed by George Will as "violence punctuated by committee meetings." Because football doesn't have the snob appeal of baseball, TNT's documentary "75 Seasons: The Story of the National Football League" (September 25 and October 3) will receive only a fragment of the attention accorded Burns's series. It's a shame, because this patchy two-hour clip-fest—narrated by the actor John Mahoney, the grouchy father on "Frasier"—is a lively, unpretentious tribute to the sport.

"75 Seasons" relies on razzle-dazzle editing, a musical score that wears itself out with Wagnerian bombast, and concussive sound effects. The former football players and coaches shown here are restless and animated as they discuss the game, reliving their memories physically. The first man to testify is the oldest: Arda Bowser, born 1899, one of the Canton Bulldogs and the last living link to the first pro season of the N.F.L. A onetime worker in a plate-glass factory in Pittsburgh, Bowser embodies football's industrial beginnings; he recalls a game in that dinosaur era when it rained on a field covered with coal dust, and the players rolled around in the muck until they became globs of soot. By the end of the documentary, we have reached the glory days of the N.F.L.: the Super Bowl ascension of the quarterback as superstar (the Jets' Joe Namath in his Mick Jagger slouch) and the coach as cool military tactician (the Cowboys' Tom Landry in his porkpie hat). And, yes, there's a cameo appearance by O. J. Simpson.

It's easy to overdo the blitz and glitz, as proved by the first head-butting broadcasts of football on Fox. But so far Fox football has pulled strong ratings numbers and, more important, nailed the younger-male demographic that advertisers seek. The noise level in the broadcast booths isn't likely to drop.

—JAMES WOLCOTT

IN BRIEF—Cont'd

Written by John Mattson. Directed by Richard Benjamin. (First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Art Greenwich Twin. . . . ¶ Embassy; through Sept. 22.)

Natural Born Killers—"Bonnie and Clyde" in a blender. Oliver Stone uses fractured, blindingly fast editing to depict the warped consciousness of Mickey (Woody Harrelson) and Mallory (Juliette Lewis), a pair of young sociopaths in love. They're familiar types, and Stone's "ideas" about American violence turn out to be the same glib received notions that we've seen in countless other outlaw-couple movies. The oddest thing about this would-be satire is that, for all the gore and hysteria, the film doesn't feel particularly impassioned; it's a frivolous barrage.—T.R. (9/5/94) (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Beekman, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

The New Age—Michael Tolkin, the author of "The Player," wrote and directed this satire about a Los Angeles couple (Judy Davis and Peter Weller) who open a boutique to finance their divorce. (Village East Cinemas and Tower East.)

The Next Karate Kid—In the fourth installment of the "Karate Kid" series, the teen-ager with a lot to learn about life and the martial arts is a girl (Hilary Swank). Noriyuki (Pat) Morita reprises his role as the wise teacher Miyagi. Directed by Christopher Cain, from a script by Mark Lee. (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, Olympia, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Orpheum VII; through Sept. 22.)

Princess Caraboo—A historical drama, set in England in 1817, based on an actual incident. An exotic young woman (Phoebe Cates) who speaks an unknown language appears in a village and manages both to charm those she meets and to arouse their suspicions. Stephen Rea co-stars as a newspaperman. Directed by Michael Austin. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Orpheum VII, and Columbus Circle.)

Quiz Show—Robert Redford's movie is a speedy, absorbing chronicle of a trivial show-business scandal of the fifties: the rigging of big-money quiz shows. The screenplay, by Paul Attanasio, tries hard to sell some sweeping ideas about the class dynamics of American society, and doesn't quite succeed. The picture's real strength is its witty, vigorous evocation of the fifties media world. Redford's alert direction captures the slapstick unreality of this odd footnote to our cultural history: the movie hums along like a well-constructed farce, and its crazy momentum carries it over the bumps of social significance. Ralph Fiennes, John Turturro, and Rob Morrow have the largest roles, but they're outshone by the supporting players: Paul Scofield, Mira Sorvino, Christopher McDonald, Allan Rich, Hank Azaria, Barry Levinson, and—best of all—David Paymer.—T.R. (9/19/94) (Village Theatre VII, Cinema I, Chelsea Cinemas, and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ 86th Street East Twin and Guild; starting Sept. 23.)

Rapa Nui—A Polynesian adventure story set on Easter Island, or Rapa Nui, before the arrival of the Europeans. Jason Scott Lee and Esai Morales are rivals for leadership and for the love of a beautiful young woman (Sandrine Holt). Directed by Kevin Reynolds. (Orpheum VII and Chelsea Cinemas.)

Red Rock West—A clever thriller about a good-hearted loner (Nicolas Cage) who trips and falls into a murder plot. It makes spooky use of the setting—a small, windblown Western town—and its surprises actually add up: for once, an angular narrative serves to sharpen the characters. Cage's shaggy hangdog charm and core of intelligence and rectitude keep the audience rooting for the hero after several dumb moves. John Dahl's direction, like the script he wrote with his brother Rick, is sure and economical. With Dennis Hopper, J. T. Walsh, and Lara Flynn Boyle.—M.S. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Satin Slipper—Manoel de Oliveira's two-part, seven-hour film, based on Paul Claudel's play about a shipwrecked conquistador. A shorter version was shown at the 1985 New York Film Festival. In French. (Public Theatre.)

A Simple Twist of Fate—Despite the title, there are convolutions aplenty in this variation on George Eliot's "Silas Marner," set in present-day Virginia. Steve Martin, who stars, also wrote and executive-produced. In the hero's miser period, Martin shuffles gold coins as deftly as Chaplin's Monsieur Verdoux did banknotes. In the hero's single-parent period (he regenerates spiritually after taking in a foundling child), Martin fails to reimagine the character as thoroughly as he did Cyrano in his triumphant "Roxanne." Still, Eliot's plot withstands the forced transition, and Martin's performance gives the melodrama an emotional center. The director, Gillies MacKinnon, tries to conjure storybook moods, yet casting Gabriel Byrne as a Southern politician and Stephen Baldwin as his kid brother strains even dream logic. Also with Catherine O'Hara.—M.S. (Gotham Cinema. . . . ¶ 86th Street East Twin; through Sept. 22.)

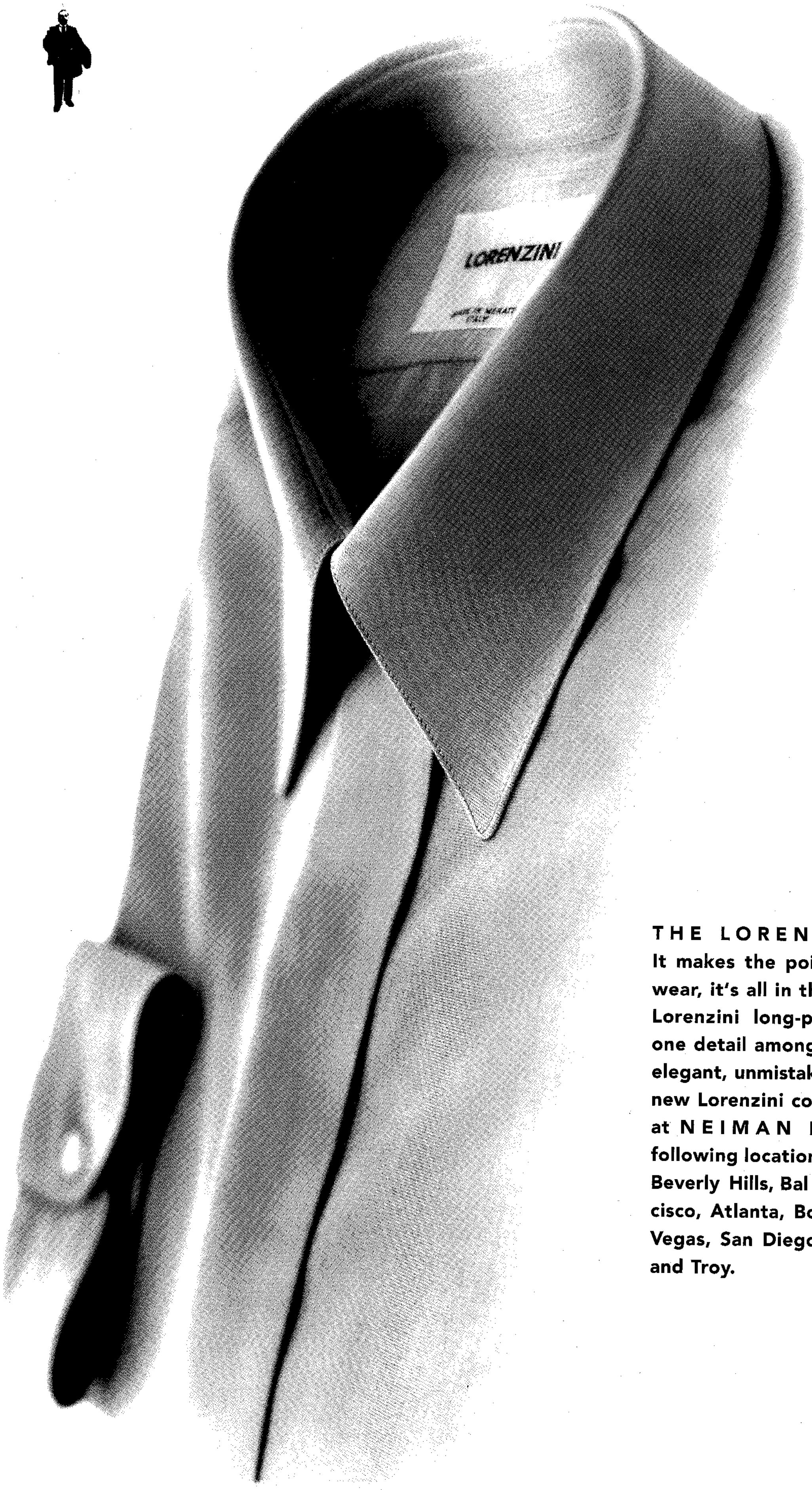
Spanking the Monkey—A movie about mother-son incest may sound like a daring writing-directing début, but David O. Russell, the fledgling auteur, stacks the deck like an old sharpie. The mother (Alberta Watson) is frustrated, careless, confined to bed with a broken leg, and medicated for pain and depression. When the son (Jeremy Davies) returns from his freshman year at M.I.T., his father (Benjamin Hendrickson) orders him to take care of her. All too obvious psychological dynamics stunt the black comedy, and the only completely lucid and spontaneous performances are by young Carla Gallo, as the boy's would-be girlfriend, and Matthew Puckett, as his cheerfully stupid buddy.—M.S. (Plaza and Quad Cinema.)

Speed—Evil mastermind Dennis Hopper (who else?) is a disgruntled psycho who wires a bomb to the bottom of a Los Angeles bus. Enter Keanu Reeves as a young cop who is one step behind Hopper, but catching up fast. The director is Jan De Bont, who used to be a cameraman; this is his first feature, and he sees the plot through in a surge of bright images. With Sandra Bullock, who gives a gutsy performance as a passenger who finds herself behind the wheel of the bus.—A.L. (6/13/94) (Waverly.)

Timecop—Time travel is illegal in the twenty-first century, but that doesn't stop this movie's villains, whom Jean-Claude Van Damme must chase backward through history. With Ron Silver and Mia Sara. Directed by Peter Hyams. (34th St. East, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and National Twin.)

Trial by Jury—The lawyer defending a Mob boss (Armand Assante) accuses the prosecutors (led by Gabriel Byrne) of "cheap theatrics." The D.A. isn't the only party guilty of that charge. The director, Heywood Gould, and his co-writer, Jordan Katz, swamp the movie with ludicrous histrionics. Joanne Whalley-Kilmer stars as a single mother and vintage-clothing entrepreneur whose jury duty becomes a nightmare when Assante threatens the life of her son. As if the melodrama weren't loaded enough, Assante forces himself upon her sexually. (She is remarkably resilient.) The cast includes William Hurt as a corrupt ex-cop and Kathleen Quinlan as a slutty freelance killer; Margaret Whitton, as Whalley-Kilmer's jury pal, delivers the only snappy line readings.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

True Lies—James Cameron and Arnold Schwarzenegger join forces for their first outing since "Terminator 2," and it's a bumpy ride. Schwarzenegger stumbles into James Bond territory as a suave international spy named Harry Tasker; it's a stiff and rather sad sight. The middle chunk of



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– Claus A. Froh

IN BRIEF—Cont'd

the film defies belief—not with special effects, unfortunately, but with humdrum misogyny. Harry suspects his wife (Jamie Lee Curtis) of adultery, kidnaps her, and subjects her to a series of humiliations, apparently in an effort to win back her love. Yeah, right. Tom Arnold saves the show as Harry's sidekick.—A.L. (7/25/94) (34th Street Showplace, Manhattan Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Regency. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Sixplex; through Sept. 22.)

What Happened Was . . .—Tom Noonan wrote, directed, and stars in this blow-by-blow saga of an awkward first date. With Karen Sillas. (Angelika Film Center.)

Young Black Cinema II—Eight short films by contemporary African-American filmmakers. (Public Theatre.)

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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EAST SIDE

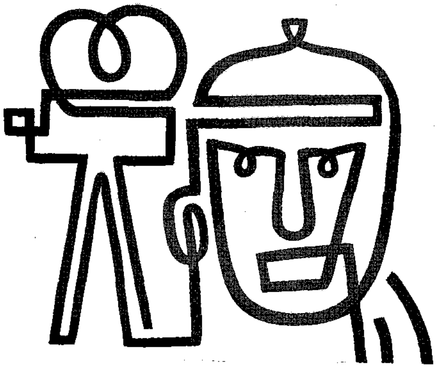
Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th (477-6600)
Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th (982-0400)
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th (924-3363)
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th (529-6799)
19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th (260-8000)
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th (689-6548)
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th (532-5544)
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th (683-0255)
Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th (755-3020)
Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th (759-1411)
Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th (759-2262)
Plaza, 42 E. 58th (355-3320)
Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th (935-6420)
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th (759-4630)
Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th (355-1663)
Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th (753-6022)
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd (752-4600)
Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th (832-1670)
Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th (737-2622)
New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th (744-7339)
68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th (734-0302)
Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st (879-1313)
East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th (249-5100)
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th (534-1880)
Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th (876-2400)
86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th (249-1144)

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd (929-8037)
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th (929-3350)
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th (255-8800)
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd (691-4744)
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd (989-0060)
Guild, 33 W. 50th (757-2406)
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th (765-7600)
57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th (581-7360)
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th (265-2520)
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th (586-1900)
Paris, 4 W. 58th (980-5656)
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th (752-5959)
Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st (247-5070)
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd (265-7466)
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd (757-2280)
Regency, B'way at 67th (724-3700)
84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th (877-3600)
Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th (222-1200)
Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th (865-8128)

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th (354-0900)
Embassy I, B'way at 46th (302-0494)
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th (730-7262)
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way (869-8340)
National Twin, B'way at 44th (869-0950)



THE 1994 FILM FESTIVAL

Tip Sheet

It's fitting that Quentin Tarantino's "Pulp Fiction" should open the New York Film Festival this week, because the director, whose triptych of dime-novel tales has been generating hype since it premièred at Cannes this past May, is a festival junkie par excellence. While other filmmakers schmooze with journalists and distributors, Tarantino spends nearly all his festival time in the theatres, soaking up everything on the screen. In his life as in his work, the former video-store clerk has an eager adolescent appetite. His use of actors, on the other hand, has become increasingly adult. Like Woody Allen, whose period gangster tale "Bullets Over Broadway" will have two festival screenings before opening locally, on October 14, Tarantino has an eye for actors' overlooked or forgotten qualities. In "Pulp Fiction," John Travolta and Bruce Willis get a chance to reinvent themselves.

For those without Tarantino's professional avidity, there are a variety of strategies for approaching the festival's twenty-six features. There's the classic no-distributor-yet approach, whose underlying assumption is that this might be the only local chance to catch films without the Miramax or Fine Line or Goldwyn or Touchstone name attached to them. Good possibilities here would be Moufida Tlati's evocative Tunisian memory piece, "The Silences of the Palace"; Terry Zwigoff's engrossing underground-comics closeup, "Crumb"; and Olivier Assayas' teen-romance feature, "Cold Water." Then there's the theme approach, which this year could take as its organizing principle sexual orientation: gay longing, in its adolescent, activist, and adult stages, is featured in "The Wild Reeds," "Postcards from America," and "Strawberry and Chocolate." Or one could think like a hungry producer and follow the word-of-mouth on potential crowd-pleasers, like "Chunking Express," "Theremin: An Electronic Odyssey," and the basketball documentary "Hoop Dreams."

—Brendan Lemon

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the film-library listings following these notes.)

Courtesans of Bombay (1983)—One could call this a curiosity if that didn't imply that curiosity would be satisfied. Ismail Merchant produced and directed this impressionistic documentary about the crammed tenement compound of Bombay's professional singing and dancing girls. Their routines bridge antiquity and disco, and the facts of their lives are provocative. But the presentation is vague and wobbly. Merchant never satisfactorily answers such inevitable questions as when and how the courtesans engage their customers sexually (or vice versa). Ruth Prawer Jhabvala wrote dialogue for Kareem Samar (as the rent collector), Saeed Jaffrey (as a fan), and Zohra Segal (as a retired courtesan).—M.S. (Whitney Museum; Sept. 24.)

In Custody (1994)—The ironies yawn, and so does the audience. Ismail Merchant makes his feature-directing début with this adaptation of Anita Desai's novel about a college lecturer (Om Puri) who attempts to interview and record the greatest living poet (Shashi Kapoor) of the dying Urdu language. Although there's scrofulous black-comic charm in the chronicle of academic snafus and the poet's own personal chaos, the pacing is laggard and the visual compositions uninspired—the language of cinema is the one that seems to be dying. Desai and Shahrukh Husain wrote the script, with poetry by Faiz Ahmed Faiz.—M.S. (Whitney Museum; Sept. 21.)

The Man Between (1953)—The title of this English thriller, directed by Carol Reed, refers to James Mason as a man caught between the East and West in postwar Berlin, but he really seems to be halfway between the character he played in Reed's "Odd Man Out" and the character Orson Welles played in Reed's "The Third Man." Mason is cast as a disenchanted, opportunistic victim of the war who is engaged in some fancy double-dealing. Claire Bloom is an English girl who innocently gets involved with Mason. The most exciting person in the film, however, is Hildegarde Neff (later Knef), in a world-weary, war-ravaged, Garboesque performance that is much too brief. Reed's love of photogenic corruption, his technical finesse, and his feeling for atmospheric intrigue almost make something really good out of Harry Kurnitz' synthetic script. The sogginess overpowers him, though.—P.K. (Anthology Film Archives; Sept. 24-25.)

La Marseillaise (1938)—Jean Renoir's pageantlike, propagandistic movie of the French Revolution. If it worked, it would rouse viewers to stand up and sing the anthem. It *doesn't* work—not quite. It's like an anthology film with a serial plot and a few recurring characters (primarily, Louis XVI and a handful of rebels from Marseilles). Were it not for the rat-a-tat-tat of drums and the rush of fresh air in the imagery, it would fall to pieces. Luckily, it's studded with invigorating details and extraordinary, stirring sequences. The most memorable one comes when exiled French aristocrats take their positions in a gavotte; the stylized movements of the dance make them resemble twirling porcelain statuettes on a creaky music box. With Pierre Renoir (as the King), Lise Delamare (as Marie Antoinette), Andrex (as the movie's revolutionary spokesman), and Edmond Ardisson (as its Everyman). In French.—M.S. (Film Forum 2; Sept. 22.)

The Moon and Sixpence (1943)—One of those indelible Hollywood tributes to artists. Despite the close adaptation of W. Somerset Maugham's alternately cutting and awe-struck novel about a Gauguin-like painter (here played by George Sanders)—a British stockbroker who leaves his family to devote

LAURA LJUNGKVIST

himself to art, first in Paris, then in Tahiti—the movie flirts with hero worship, partly because Herbert Marshall doesn't provide sufficient counterweight as the Maugham figure and narrator. The way the writer-director, Albert Lewin, edits Maugham's material, a charismatically saturnine Sanders almost always gets the last word, no matter how misanthropic or misogynistic.—M.S. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Sept. 24.)

Playtime (1967)—Masterly and wearying. Jacques Tati conjures a comic architecture out of everything from Parisian traffic patterns and street lights to space-age airports, showrooms, and office buildings. But he doesn't fill it with anything hilarious until his characters pile into a tony supper club whose grand opening and actual completion are running on slightly different schedules. Film students and directors are the best audience for this farce—Tati is nonpareil when it comes to using the wide screen for ticklish compositional effects. With Tati as M. Hulot; American dialogue by Art Buchwald.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; Sept. 24-25.)

The Unholy Three (1930)—Lon Chaney in a talkie remake of one of his grotesque, horrifying silent hits. He plays Echo, a crooked ventriloquist, who works in a dime museum along with a malevolent midget (Harry Earles, later the star of "Freaks") and a strong man (Ivan Linow). They sell parrots who, with Echo's aid, appear to be great talkers; when dissatisfied customers complain, the three visit the customers' homes, which they subsequently burglarize. (Surely the most outlandish burglary scheme on film.) This sound version, directed by Jack Conway, isn't as nightmarishly well done as the Tod Browning silent, but Chaney ("the man of a thousand faces") demonstrates that he also has a variety of voices (he uses four), and the sound is particularly effective in the courtroom climax, when, masquerading as an old woman, he suddenly gives himself away by speaking like a man. With Lila Lee, John Miljan, and Elliott Nugent.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Sept. 26.)

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

New York Film Festival—The first programs in a seventeen-day series of international films. At **alice tully hall:** Sept. 23 at 7:30: "Pulp Fiction" (Quentin Tarantino; United States).... **avery fisher hall:** Sept. 23 at 8:30: "Pulp Fiction.".... **alice tully hall:** Sept. 24 at noon: "Martha" (1973, Rainer Werner Fassbinder; Germany).... ¶ Sept. 24 at 2:45 and Sept. 25 at 9:30: "Exotica" (Atom Egoyan; Canada).... ¶ Sept. 24 at 6 and Sept. 25 at 1:30: "Strawberry and Chocolate" (Juan Carlos Tabio and Tomás Gutiérrez Alea; Cuba/Mexico/Spain).... ¶ Sept. 24 at 9 and midnight: "Ed Wood" (Tim Burton; United States).... ¶ Sept. 25 at 4:15 and Sept. 26 at 6: "Chunking Express" (Wong Kar-wai; Hong Kong).... ¶ Sept. 25 at 6:45: "Through the Olive Trees" (Abbas Kiarostami; Iran).... ¶ Sept. 26 at 9 and Sept. 27 at 6: "Caro Diario" (Nanni Morette; Italy/France).... ¶ Sept. 27 at 9: "Crumb" (Terry Zwigoff; United States). (For tickets, call 875-5050.)

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)—Sept. 21: "La Grande Illusion" (1937, directed by Jean Renoir; in French) and "A Day in the Country" (1937, Renoir; in French).... ¶ Sept. 22: "La Marseillaise" (†); and "La Vie Est à Nous" (1936, Renoir; in French).... ¶ Sept. 23-25: "The Golden Coach" (1953, Renoir) and "Picnic on the Grass" (1959, Renoir; in French).... ¶ Sept. 26: "Mr. Wu" (1927, William High) and "The Unholy Three" (†).... ¶ Sept. 27: "This Land Is Mine" (1943, Renoir) and "The Southerner" (1945, Renoir).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A series of films from M-G-M studios. Sept. 22 at 2:30: "Ben-Hur" (1925, Fred Niblo), with Ramon Novarro.... Sept. 22 at 6: "Ben-Hur" (1959, William Wyler), with Charlton Heston.... Sept. 23 at 2:30 and Sept. 24 at 5:30: "The Garden of Allah" (1927, Rex Ingram).... Sept. 23 at 6: "Turn on the Right" (1921, Ingram).... Sept. 23 at 8 and Sept. 26 at 2:30: "Mare Nostrum" (1925-26, Ingram).... Sept. 24 at noon and Sept. 26 at 6: "Scaramouche" (1923, Ingram).... Sept. 24 at 3: "The Prisoner of Zenda" (1922, Ingram).... Sept. 25 at 1 and Sept. 27 at 6: "The Magician" (1926, Ingram).... Sept. 25 at 3 and Sept. 27 at 2:30: "The Conquering Power" (1921, Ingram).... Sept. 25 at 5: "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" (1920, Ingram).... ¶ A program of television films by Alan Clarke. Sept. 22 at 3: "Diane" (1975).... Sept. 22 at 6: "The Firm" (1988).... Sept. 23 at 3: "Beloved Enemy" (1980).... Sept. 23 at 6:30: "Contact" (1985).... Sept. 23 at 8 and Sept. 26 at 6: "Psy-Warriors" (1981).... Sept. 24 at 2:30: "Made in Britain" (1982).... Sept. 24 at 5: "Rita, Sue, and Bob Too" (1987).... Sept. 25 at 2:30: "Road" (1987).... Sept. 25 at 5: "Christine" (1987).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Through Sept. 23, a program of new films from Turkey.... ¶ A program of films directed by, and with, Jacques Tati. Sept. 24-25 at 2, 5, and 8: "Playtime" (†).... Sept. 26 at 2 and 6:30 and Sept. 27 at 4 and 9:45: "Jour de Fête" (1950).... Sept. 26 at 4:15 and 8:45 and Sept. 27 at 2 and 6: "Mr. Hulot's Holiday" (1953).... Sept. 27 at 8: "Parade" (1973).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—A program of films directed by Albert Lewin. Sept. 24 at 2:30: "Pandora and the Flying Dutchman" (1951).... Sept. 24 at 5: "The Moon and Sixpence" (†).... Sept. 25 at 2: "The Picture of Dorian Gray" (1945).... Sept. 25 at 4:30: "Saadia" (1954).

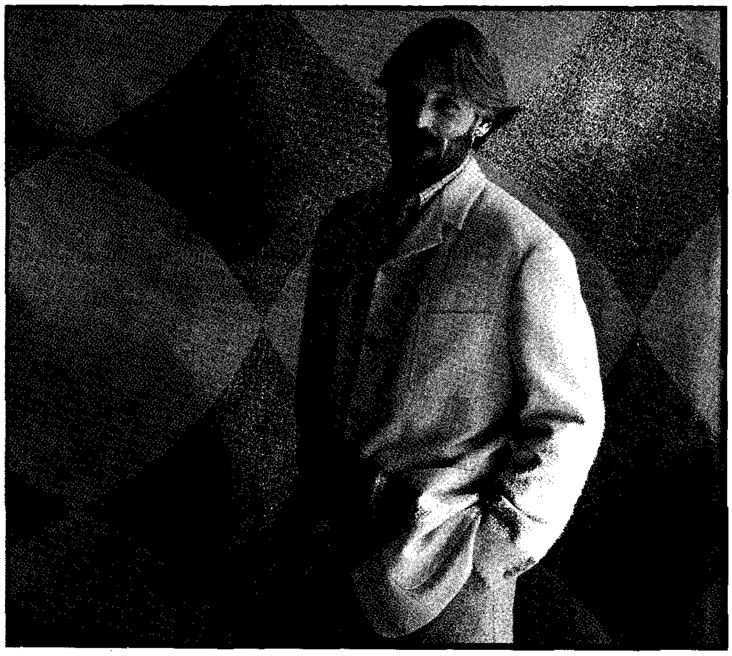
A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Sept. 25 at 7, author Christopher Bram will introduce his favorite film, James Whale's "The Old Dark House" (1932), with Charles Laughton.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (570-3949)—Sept. 23 at 7: "Fatal Attraction" (1987, Adrian Lyne), with Michael Douglas, Glenn Close, and Anne Archer.

Goethe House, 1014 Fifth Ave., at 82nd St. (439-8700)—Sept. 22 at 6: "Hallo Comrade" (1993, Manfred Stelzer).... ¶ Sept. 22 at 8 and Sept. 27 at 6: "The Lying Game" (1993, Bertram von Boxberg).... ¶ Sept. 23 at 6 and Sept. 27 at 8: "Rising to the Bait" (1991, Vadim Glowna).... ¶ Sept. 23 at 8: "No More Mr. Nice Guy" (1992, Detlev Buck).

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—A program of films from India. Sept. 21 at noon, Sept. 22 at 1:15, Sept. 23 at noon, Sept. 24 at 2:15, and Sept. 25 at noon: Five different programs of short films and videos.... Sept. 21 at 3:30: "In Custody" (†).... Sept. 22 at 5:30: "Mississippi Masala" (1992, Mira Nair).... Sept. 23 at 4: "West Is West" (1988, David Rathod).... Sept. 24 at noon: "Salaam Bombay!" (1988, Nair; in Hindi).... Sept. 24 at 4:30: "Courtesans of Bombay" (†).... Sept. 25 at 2: "One Hand Don't Clap" (1988, Kavery Kaul).... Sept. 25 at 4: "An Unremarkable Life" (1989, Amin Q. Chaudhri).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—A program of films directed by Carol Reed. Sept. 22 at 7 and Sept. 25 at 5: "The Stars Look Down" (1939).... Sept. 22 at 9 and Sept. 25 at 7: "Odd Man Out" (1946).... Sept. 23 at 7: "The Fallen Idol" (1948).... Sept. 23 at 9: "The Third Man" (1950).... Sept. 24 at 5: "Outcast of the Islands" (1952).... Sept. 24 at 7 and Sept. 25 at 9: "The Man Between" (†).... ¶ Sept. 24 at 9: "Andy Warhol's Dracula" (1975, Paul Morrissey).



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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

DR. ELDERS' MEDICAL HISTORY

DR. JOYCELYN ELDERS is to the conservative movement what Robert Bork once was to liberals—a fund-raiser's dream. Last week, the Reverend Jerry Falwell warned his mailing-list flock that the Surgeon General celebrates homosexual intercourse, and he offered, for a suggested gift of twenty-five or thirty-five dollars, to submit to the President its members' collective plea that she be fired. When we caught up with Dr. Elders, she had recently returned from the ordeal of watching an Arkansas judge slap her son with a ten-year prison sentence for selling cocaine to an undercover policeman. Like Falwell, she searched for divine meaning in the nightmare. "God's good, and he may have been taking care of me," she said. "My son is presently in treatment."

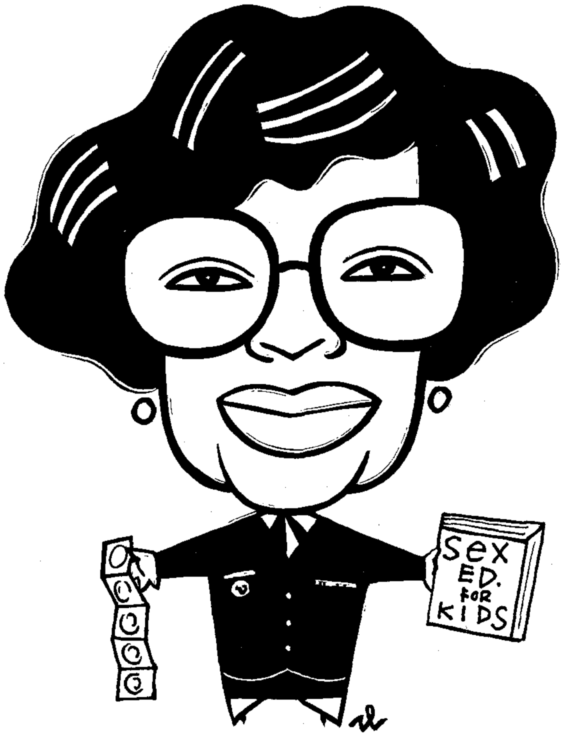
Yet despite recent events, her sense of humor seemed undiminished as she imagined her political foes discussing her bankability: "This is a good horse and let's ride it till the end," she said. Last month, Gary Bauer, the president of American Renewal and a former adviser to Ronald Reagan, rode her hard. He plastered her toothy official portrait all over the *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today,* in advertisements attacking the President's health plan. "BILL CLINTON CHOSE THIS DOCTOR," runs the ad's headline. "NOW HE WANTS TO CHOOSE YOURS."

Lost amid the crossfire over Dr. Elders' views—she favors early sex education, high-school condom distribution, and the legalization of RU 486—is exactly what kind of doctor she was in the quarter century prior to 1987, when Clinton chose her to run the Arkansas Department of Health. Earlier, in her Washington office, after a pizza lunch with her staff, we asked her about her years of work as a pediatric endocrinologist.

Back in Arkansas, Dr. Elders was the doctor of choice if your child's pancreas couldn't produce insulin or if your child was the one in a thousand born with dwarfism. And whenever obstetricians were at a loss to solve the central, dramatic mystery attending the delivery of a newborn—"*Is it a boy or a girl?*"—they paged Dr. Elders. "Any baby born with ambiguous-looking genitalia, I was always called," she said. "These were pseudo-hermaphrodites." She would treat such babies to insure that their external sex organs matched their chromosomal and gonadal makeup. Like many experts, she believes that gender identity forms at the age of two or three, and that thereafter there's no turning back. When treating older children, she said, "Whatever they were raised as, you would try to keep them. If you have a boy thinking that he's a girl, then all you really can do is just take out everything and make a good vaginal pouch, and the child can function very well as a female."

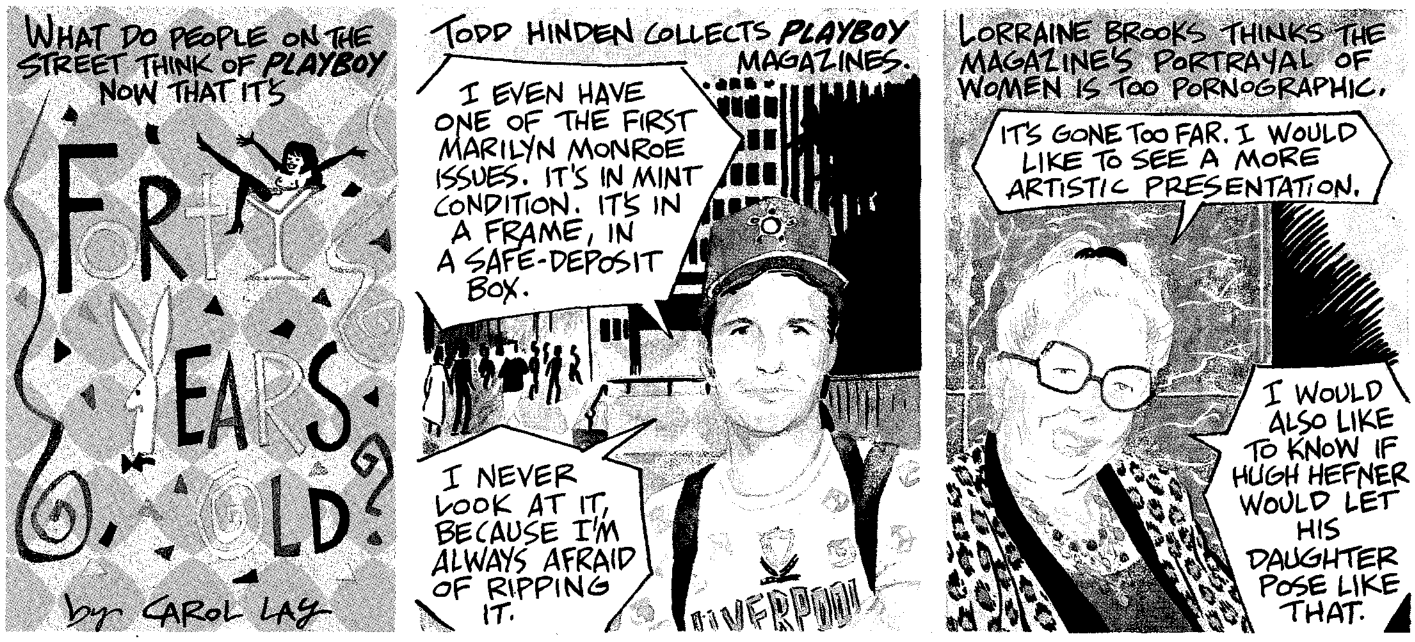
At the University of Arkansas, Dr. Elders taught about these rare surgical procedures: "I always told my students, 'I can make a good female, but it's very hard to make a male.' See, the *greatest* tragedy is if you've got someone who's genotypically a girl and you let them grow up thinking they're a boy. Then you would do all you could to make them into the best boy you could."

You see enough alarming cases and it's no wonder you come to appreciate healthy sexual development, as Dr. Elders does. When fathers brought short-stature sons to Dr. Elders, she not only prescribed a growth hormone but continually talked to the boys and their parents about the boys' delayed puberty; when mothers brought in daughters with precocious puberty, she counselled the girls about their aborning sexual development. Of more extreme cases, she remembers seeing at least ten girls who were menstru-



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT DEMICHIELL

THE TALK OF THE TOWN'S ARTIST AT LARGE


WHAT DO PEOPLE ON THE STREET THINK OF PLAYBOY NOW THAT IT'S
FORTY YEARS OLD?
by CAROL LAY
TODD HINDEN COLLECTS PLAYBOY MAGAZINES.
I EVEN HAVE ONE OF THE FIRST MARILYN MONROE ISSUES. IT'S IN MINT CONDITION. IT'S IN A FRAME, IN A SAFE-DEPOSIT BOX.
I NEVER LOOK AT IT, BECAUSE I'M ALWAYS AFRAID OF RIPPING IT.
LIVERPOOL
LORRAINE BROOKS THINKS THE MAGAZINE'S PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IS TOO PORNOGRAPHIC.
IT'S GONE TOO FAR. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE A MORE ARTISTIC PRESENTATION.
I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO KNOW IF HUGH HEFNER WOULD LET HIS DAUGHTER POSE LIKE THAT.

ating prior to the age of two. When she couldn't suppress the errant hormones causing puberty, she prescribed Depo-provera, an injectable contraceptive, to prevent pregnancy.

A small child can get pregnant?

"Remember the five-year-old who had a baby in Peru? That was just a case of precocious puberty." In a June interview with *USA Weekend*, Dr. Elders briefly mentioned an eight-year-old Arkansas girl who delivered twins. (The girl had apparently been sexually abused.) This set off the human-interest radar of a pair of British reporters, who advertised for a week in the Arkansas *Democrat Gazette*, looking—so far unsuccessfully—for leads on the case.

Preventing young people from bearing children is Dr. Elders' obsession. As it turns out, she is not the first Surgeon General to frighten some Americans by frankly promoting sexual literacy. In the nineteen-thirties, Franklin Roosevelt's Surgeon General Thomas Parran had to face down squeamish culture guardians during a crusade to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. While still commissioner of the New York State Department of Health, he refused to excise the word "syphilis" from a radio broadcast, and CBS cancelled his appearance. Were Dr. Parran around today, chances are he'd be listed alongside Dr. Elders in Reverend Falwell's fund-raising entreaty.

FAITHFULL FANS

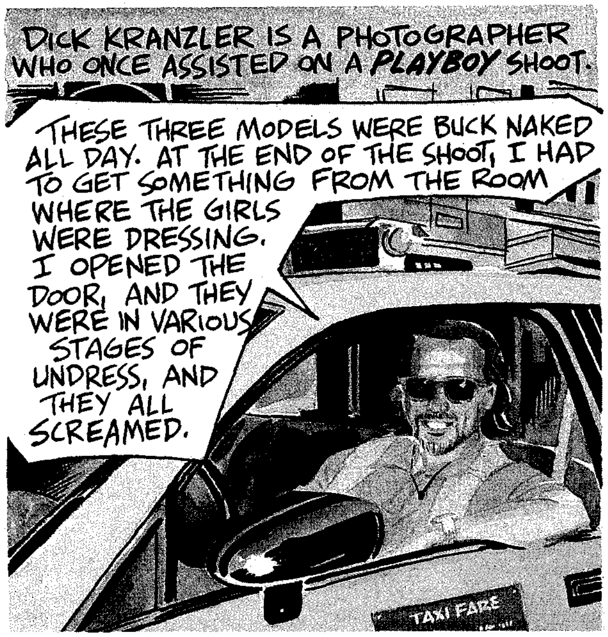
MARIANNE FAITHFULL was pulling on a cigarette as urgently as a sailor hauling rope while she leafed through the story of her life and wondered just which segments to read from at Rizzoli on West Broadway a few hours later. On the front cover of her book, which is entitled "Faithfull" and which went to No. 1 in England, the singer's homeland, she is depicted as a deathly, dark-eyed icon. Right now, though, she was looking the way she usually does: both fragile and indestructible, a bouncer princess with a smile broad enough to admit a croissant, sidewise.

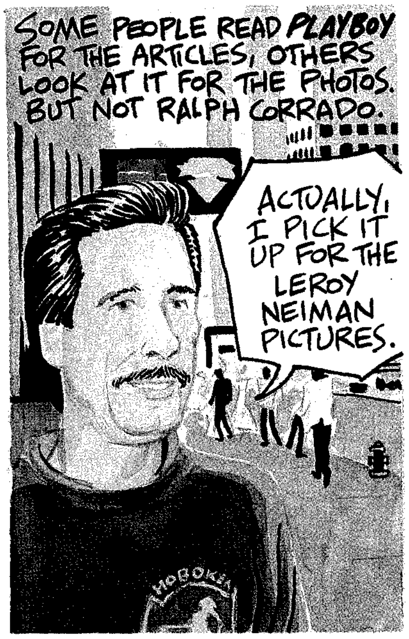
There was some great family stuff in her book, we told her. Indeed, considering the course of Faithfull's life from her first hit, "As Tears Go By," through heroin and rehab, it was interesting to learn that a great-uncle of hers was Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, whose novels, most notably "Venus in Furs," gave his name to "masochism." But Faithfull admitted that she had never read that book. "I skimmed it," she said. "It's as dull as ditchwater. De Sade is much more interesting." There were druggy scenes, too, in "Faithfull," some rather hellish, followed by the singer's return from the career dead as the dark diva of her record "Broken English." Faithfull confessed, though, that popular interest still focusses on her long-ago liaisons with Mick Jagger and Keith Richards.

Had either Rolling Stone been heard from? "I'm not waiting," Faithfull said sunnily. But some people are hoping for trouble, she intimated. "The best possible scenario would be if Mick got terribly upset and Keith got terribly upset and I got so upset that I went back on drugs. That would be a perfect ending. It's all rather a turn-on for the public and the journalists."

The crowd waiting for her at Rizzoli included faces from Faithfull's past such as D. A. Pennebaker and Victor Bockris, several studious-looking people who talked of her work in Brecht and Weill, and a cadaverous man in two-tone boots and a velour jacket—perfect garb for getting a backstage pass in 1967, but a non-starter in 1994. Faithfull arrived with un-rock-starry promptness, at a few minutes past seven. She seated herself beside a stuffed tiger at the rear of the bookstore and began to read. Her voice is husky, no nonsense, a good voice for reading fairy tales to children, and these were fairy tales, in a way, because the pieces she was reading weren't the hard-drugs bits, or the Mick and Keith bits, but evocative bits about the Kings Road: boutiques, druids, flying saucers—as lost as Avalon.

The autographing took place upstairs, afterward. Looking both paler and more invulnerable than ever, Faithfull sat at a


DICK KRANZLER IS A PHOTOGRAPHER WHO ONCE ASSISTED ON A PLAYBOY SHOOT.
THESE THREE MODELS WERE BUCK NAKED ALL DAY. AT THE END OF THE SHOOT, I HAD TO GET SOMETHING FROM THE ROOM WHERE THE GIRLS WERE DRESSING. I OPENED THE DOOR, AND THEY WERE IN VARIOUS STAGES OF UNDRESS, AND THEY ALL SCREAMED.
TAXI FARE


SOME PEOPLE READ PLAYBOY FOR THE ARTICLES, OTHERS LOOK AT IT FOR THE PHOTOS. BUT NOT RALPH CORRADO.
ACTUALLY, I PICK IT UP FOR THE LEROY NEIMAN PICTURES.
HOBOKEN

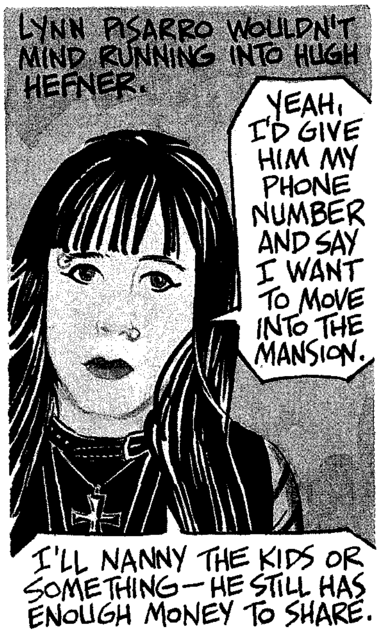

LYNN PISARRO WOULDN'T MIND RUNNING INTO HUGH HEFNER.
YEAH, I'D GIVE HIM MY PHONE NUMBER AND SAY I WANT TO MOVE INTO THE MANSION.
I'LL NANNY THE KIDS OR SOMETHING—HE STILL HAS ENOUGH MONEY TO SHARE.

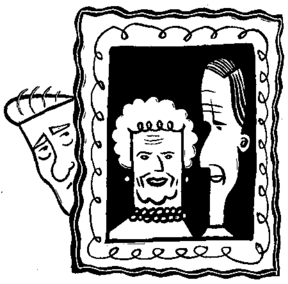
table covered by a black cloth on which stood a vase of white roses, and began signing books, CDs, and whatever else she was handed, one thing apparently being a petition to free a country in the Far East. "Broken English" was playing on the sound system. Most people who had had things signed looked happy, even ravished. A few seemed to hug a sort of guilty triumph, as though they had just had sex with a stranger.

WHERE WAS BILL?

IN Washington the other day (before the crazy small-plane crash on the lawn), we took the public tour of the White House, moved along to the East Gate entrance by exhortations from Smokey the Bear-hatted National Park Service rangers and to the accompaniment of a Disney World-like commentary issuing from speakers planted in the bushes. Our place on line was behind a rather sombre, beer-bellied gent wearing baby-blue-colored shorts, a loud plaid shirt, and a U.S. Navy cap. Zombielike, in synch with the Navy gent, we paused at the bookstand at the end of the glass-enclosed colonnade leading to the Ground Floor Corridor. Navy bought a paperback copy of "The White House: An Historic Guide" ($5.75). So did we. He started reading the book's letter of greeting aloud, in a grumpy monotone, apparently to himself. The letter was from Barbara Bush. Navy was phlegmatic in his reading, not a whit astonished. He read: "George and I are delighted to welcome you to the White House. . . ." Barbara Bush mentioned, among a few other facts: "In the East Room hangs the portrait of George Washington that Dolley Madison saved when British soldiers set fire to the mansion during the War of 1812." We took the greeting from there and quickly got almost to the end: "George and I take great pleasure in sharing the President's House with our children and grandchildren. . . ." Navy, sturdily, seemed to be studying the index. Its entries included "Bush, George" and "Lincoln, Abraham," but no "Clinton, William."

Navy went ahead to look at the East Room, but we lingered at the bookstand and bought a copy of "The Living White House" (also $5.75). On page 5, over the table of contents, was a photograph of George and Barbara Bush. On the very next page was a color photograph of Barbara reading a book to four children, and a foreword by her: "George and I take pleasure in sharing with you a portrait of life in this historic house. . . ." Some pages later we came upon a color photograph of George and Barbara standing in front of a large decorated Christmas tree in the Blue Room. "The holiday season is a time for sharing the White House with family, close friends, and other visitors. Barbara and George Bush greet their guests. . . ." The book had scattered photographs of portraits and drawings of other Presidents and their wives and children and pets, including a solo shot of Nancy Reagan's King Charles spaniel Rex, along with additional color photographs of George and Barbara with children, babies, dogs, puppies, and horseshoes. And still not a sign of "Clinton, William."

Only two other books were for sale at the stand: "The First Ladies of the United States of America" and "The Presidents of the United States of America" ($5.25 each). We bought the latter. Finally. On the cover was a reproduction of the famous Gilbert Stuart painting of George Washington with sword. On the last page was a photograph of William Clinton. "Clinton, William J." was also in the index.



We caught up with the Navy gent in the Entrance Hall. He was staring at a Steinway grand piano with gilt eagle supports. He held up "The White House: An Historic Guide," with the letter of greeting from Barbara Bush, open to a photograph of the East Room showing the piano in its rightful place. Why was the piano now in the Entrance Hall? "The new people are trying to mess around with the furniture," the Navy gent said. ♦

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LIFE AND LETTERS

TRUE LIES

What's the difference between spinning and lying? Or are James Carville and Mary Matalin too dizzy to remember?

BY MICHAEL KINSLEY

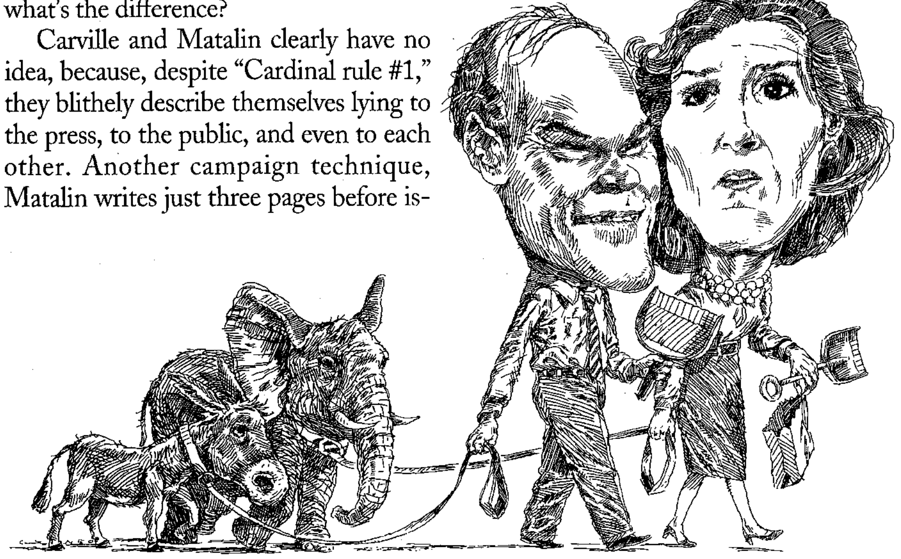
JAMES CARVILLE and Mary Matalin spin but don't lie. Or so they say in "All's Fair," their sparring-sweethearts memoir of the 1992 Presidential campaign, written with Peter Knobler (a joint publication—ain't that adorable?—of Random House and Simon & Schuster). Carville, who ran Bill Clinton's campaign, and Matalin, who helped run George Bush's, relish their reputations as spinners. "Spin Doctors in Love" was the headline on the *Newsweek* cover story that was an excerpt from their book, and the most vivid pages in the book capture the visceral excitement of a "spin session" after one of the Presidential debates. Of her mentor, the late Lee Atwater, Matalin says, with swooning admiration, "He couldn't wait to spin for his guy." The 1992 campaign was the apotheosis of spin; Carville and Matalin are its troubadours.

But lying is something else. "Cardinal rule #1: *No matter what, don't lie to the press.*" So writes Matalin, and the italics are hers. Carville agrees: "The best way to develop a good relationship with a reporter is to call him or her back, fight hard, and don't lie." Thus "All's Fair" raises the vexing philosophical question: If "spinning" is good and "lying" is bad, what's the difference?

Carville and Matalin clearly have no idea, because, despite "Cardinal rule #1," they blithely describe themselves lying to the press, to the public, and even to each other. Another campaign technique, Matalin writes just three pages before issuing her anathema on lying, "is the floating of an idea in the press without attribution, just to gauge the reaction. If it gets shot down by pundits and colleagues, you deny your campaign said it." In the next chapter, she tells how the Bush campaign dealt with a private poll showing that Dan Quayle was a drag on the ticket. The press "had no idea actual data existed—and, in fact, we continued to insist vehemently that 'Quayle was a neutral in our polls.' "

Carville recalls his first big success as a campaign consultant: He got Robert Casey elected governor of Pennsylvania in 1986, over Republican William Scranton III. Scranton had admitted smoking marijuana in the nineteen-sixties, but Casey had promised not to make an issue of it. Carville describes with glee his technique of making an issue of it while seeming not to. That's just spin, I suppose. However, he also quotes himself telling a colleague, "We can't run a drug spot, but we have got to put out that we are getting ready to run a drug spot, O.K.?" O.K., what would you call that?

Matalin is amusing about the press's ludicrous multiday obsession with the


JOHN CUNEO

question of whether she had or had not apologized to Bush for a fax attack on Clinton that was widely perceived as having gone too far. (The document began, "Sniveling Hypocritical Democrats. . . .") She recalls her heroic efforts to beat back allegations that she had apologized. Yet she also quotes herself apologizing ("Mr. President, I'm so sorry . . ."). Is she even aware that she has admitted the very thing she describes herself hectically denying? If so, she gives no sign of it. Carville, meanwhile, describes himself in the act of plotting how the Clinton campaign should respond to the fax-attack flap, and then, a few pages later, Matalin quotes Carville telling her he had nothing to do with the Clinton response. "I specifically stayed out of it," she says he said. Oh, what tangled webs we weave.

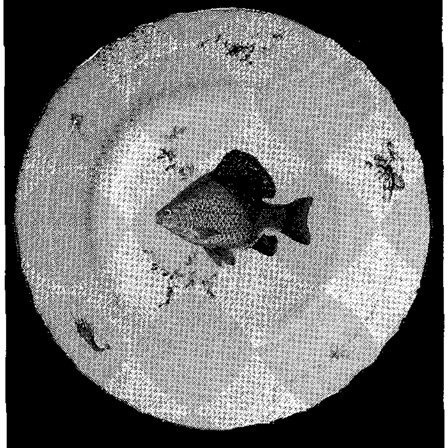
WHEN Carville and Matalin tell us that they don't lie to the press, these statements are themselves just spin—or lies, to use the layperson's term. But you cannot win the spin game by demonstrating that Carville and Matalin are bullshitters. They will grinningly agree that they *are* bullshitters and then expect points for honesty for having said so. All the most damning arguments against "All's Fair" and the James 'n' Mary phenomenon in general—that they are "spinning their own lives," that they symbolize "the incestuousness of Washington elites, the vacuousness of campaigns and the cynicism of the handlers who run them," that they argue in public as a "shtick" because they "know it sells," that they're self-styled populists with a cellar full of fancy wine who "were created and are sustained by the establishment they claim to despise," that, in short, they're big phonies—are made in *Newsweek's* own introduction to its excerpt from their book. But seeing through Carville and Matalin completely doesn't stop *Newsweek* from hyping them on its cover. In today's all-spin-all-the-time culture, if you actually complain about such things you look like a humorless sorehead. Still, since Carville and Matalin seem to represent the state of the art in a variety of fields—political consulting, celebrity, love—it is worth at least attempting to untangle a bit of their line.

Although Carville and Matalin are designated as "spin doctors," they are really more like "spin patients"—victims of spin disease, and, of course, carriers as well. James and Mary's problem is clinical: they are addicted to spin. Their book is best seen as a cry for help. In a way, it is unfair to accuse them of lying, because spin has corroded their brains to the point where they are no longer capable of distinguishing truth from that other category, whatever you choose to call it.

For example, Matalin tells of a typical campaign crisis: President Bush, campaigning in Georgia, has been booked into an Episcopal church one Sunday. She writes, "Congressman Newt Gingrich went crazy. 'We've got to go to a Baptist church!' he screamed at me. 'Twenty-four point four percent of the vote is Baptist!' " So Matalin "switched the church." But word about the switch gets out, leading to a flurry of frantic phone calls and other repercussions. All this is very funny, and well told. But then Matalin concludes the anecdote on this self-righteous note: "It's already in the papers that we're switching, so the whole point of going to the church is undermined because it looks like a political event and not what it was, George Bush doing what he does every Sunday, practicing his faith."

Now, wait a minute. If the church visit was *not* a "political event" but simply a matter of Bush "practicing his faith," then "the whole point of going to the church" was *not* undermined, since he did in fact go to church and practice his faith. To be sure, Bush was forced to go to a Baptist church, not one of his own Episcopal persuasion. But that is because it *was* a "political event," not because it "looked like" one. It was only *as a political event* that the occasion was undermined by looking like a political event. Politics was, in fact, "the whole point," as Matalin demonstrates in the very act of denying it.

Indeed, in describing a later episode, Matalin unconsciously reveals the ultimate expression of the spinmaster's creed: If a politician's statement or action is actually sincere, and not a product of the spinmaster's art, it should be treated as if it never happened. In the last, desperate days of the campaign, Bush appeared on "Larry King Live" and attacked Clinton for failing to "level with the American people . . . on whether he went to Moscow." Clinton had in fact never denied that while studying at Oxford he once visited Moscow as a tourist. What he denied, quite rightly, was that there was anything sinister about this. Matalin recalls that "the reference to Moscow created a mini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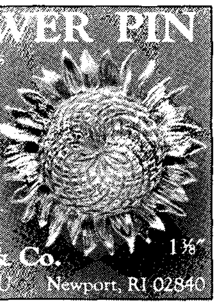

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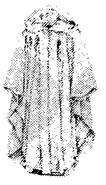
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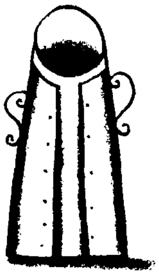
press frenzy" and added to Bush's woes.

Matalin apparently agrees that bringing up the Moscow trip was a mistake. The press, she says, "played it as a red-baiting campaign strategy." Her defense: "It was absolutely not a campaign strategy. . . . No one told the President to include Moscow in his litany of Clinton evasions, and when he did . . . we knew the press would never believe this wasn't an intentional strategy, that this one came from George Bush's heart." It came from the candidate's heart, you see, and therefore it shouldn't be held against him. It wasn't "intentional"; it wasn't campaign spin; it wasn't thought up by someone else and handed to him on a platter: he *really meant it!* Therefore, under the topsy-turvy logic of spin, it doesn't count. Tragically, such genuine moments will occasionally break through the web of campaign artifice. But when they do, decent people will avert their eyes.

"There is a rule of thumb in political consulting," Carville reveals with deadpan earnestness two-thirds of the way through the book. "What a candidate thinks really matters." This is good to know, but the larger burden of "All's Fair" is that Carville and Matalin don't really think it matters much. In an interesting passage Carville discusses his search for what he calls a "rationale" for Clinton's Presidential campaign. This came in the late spring of 1992, when Clinton had already hired a staff, spent millions, and won many delegates. But he still needed a rationale. "It took almost three months, but finally our thinking began to crystallize," Carville recalls. "Clearly where we were was 'Putting People First.' " Carville waxes humble about this brilliant conceptual breakthrough. "Putting *something* first was an old political saw: 'Put New Jersey First,' 'Put Virginia First.' It just sort of expanded to the most universal of all universes, 'Put People First.' " As opposed to what? Putting animals first? Putting household appliances first? Oh, well. Clinton now had his "rationale."



Both Matalin and Carville (the book consists of alternating passages in her voice and his) use the Washington idiom, in which references to the campaign organization as "we" slip into references to the candidate himself as "we." When Matalin writes that "we" gave a speech, she is merely being accurate: under modern methods of production, the actual mouthing of the words is the smallest part of political oratory. But when Carville describes the stance that emerged from an emergency spin-control meeting over the revelation of Clinton's famous draft letter of 1969—"We weren't hiding, we weren't flinching. We had convictions *and we'd had them for twenty-two years*"—it starts to get eerie. Whose life is it, anyway?

OUTSIDERS are often surprised, and sometimes offended, to discover that people in Washington don't take politics very seriously. A friend of mine likes to tell of how Norman Podhoretz, the New York neoconservative intellectual, attending a Washington reception some years back, was scandalized at the sight of his ideological allies making jovial conversation with Mary McGrory, the grande dame of Washington liberal columnists. Washingtonians live and breathe politics, as we all know, and consider the prospects for health-care reform to be an adequate conversational icebreaker, the way citizens of other cities might raise the fate of the local sports team. But, partly because it is indeed the local business and the local sport, politics in Washington is drained of a lot of ideological passion.

It is easy to mock the prissy Podhoretz attitude (and I reserve the right to do so). But the worldly Washingtonian approach can also be off-putting. Of course politics shouldn't swallow up all of life, and of course in a democracy it is good for political opponents to respect or even admire each other. But surely, if politics is more than just a game or a job it should affect how you choose to live your life, including whom you choose to befriend. Furthermore, as Meg Greenfield has pointed out, the premise that politics is "only politics"—a thing apart from real life and genuine personal relationships—liberates politics itself to be that much more cynical, nasty, and dishonest.

"Washington" is a metaphorical term, not a geographical one, and it covers most of those who sneer at "Washington" (or at "the political class," as George Will, the teacher's pet of the political class, likes to put it). A few weeks ago, for example, I got a letter from a publicist representing Ralph Reed, the head of the Christian Coalition, asking if I would supply a publicity blurb for Reed's new book, described as "the manifesto of the religious conservative movement." My only connection with Reed is that we have appeared together several times on the CNN program "Crossfire," where we have essentially called each other the Antichrist. Yet in "Washington" it was not unreasonable to suppose that our calling each other the Antichrist is a bond we share, and that I might be happy to engage in an act of mutual hype between consenting adults.

How to integrate your political values with your personal life is a difficult question, and not just in Washington. The romance of James and Mary poses this difficulty in its baldest form—"something that had never happened in the annals of presidential politics: a boyfriend and girlfriend working against each other," as Matalin theatrically puts it. She claims that the prospect made her throw up, though the both of them seem to find it mighty cute in retrospect. "All's Fair" wallows in the cuteness and contains not a drop of insight into the question of how you can love someone whose values you purport to despise.

Needless to say, love is an eternal mystery. Who can explain it? Who can tell you why? But James and Mary are also friends with each other's friends. As Carville's spouse, Matalin socializes with the Clintonites. As Matalin's husband, Carville attended the recent wedding of Rush Limbaugh, Clinton's mortal enemy. How do they do it? In "All's Fair," the only reflection on this matter comes in passing from Matalin, in a discussion of her dealings with the press. She explains, "As a Midwesterner, I always react to people in general by liking them. . . . I always consider individuals first." Putting People First, you might say. She goes on, high-schoolishly:

> Some of them, I know, aren't going to like me on general principles. They just have preconceived notions about conservatives. . . . For instance, I think in real life I would like liberal columnist Michael Kinsley, if I ever got to know him. But he's one of those guys who I just know is going to hate me no matter what comes up. If you know somebody's going to hate you then your first reaction is, at a minimum, to be wary. And probably not to like them before they don't like you, so you don't feel rejected. So I basically always stayed away from predictable libs.

As a Midwesterner myself, I sympathize with Matalin's distress over the way some people prejudge folks they don't

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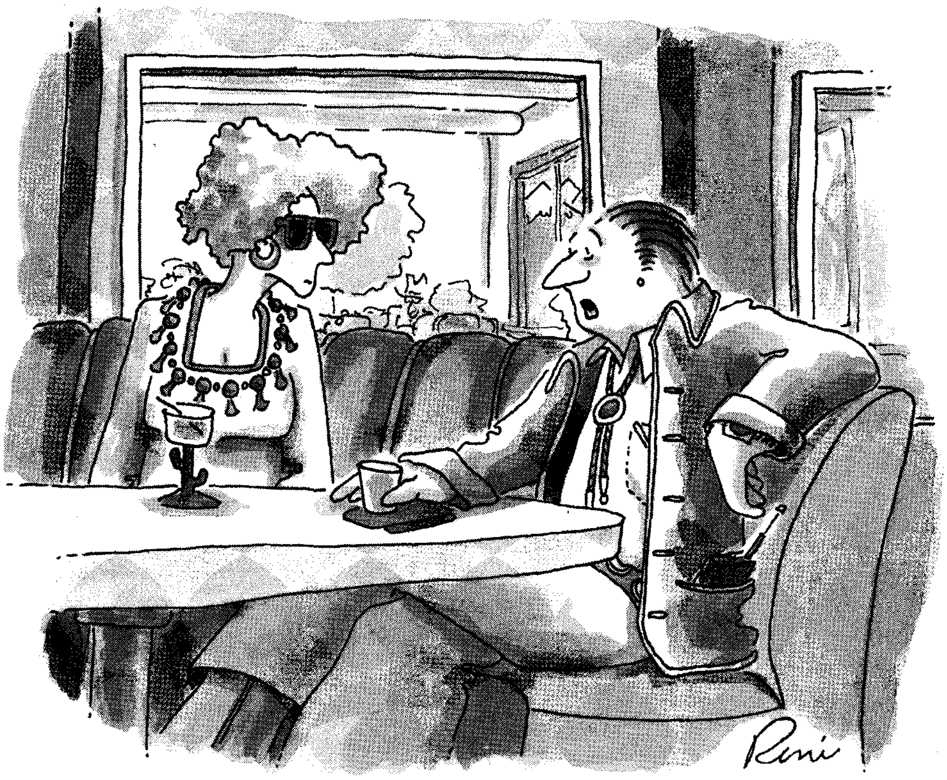

"Santa Fe's great, but only New York understands me."

know. But it is characteristic of Matalin to think that "in real life" (wherever that may be) she might even like the deplorable Kinsley. She likes everybody, by always making the crucial, if puzzling, distinction between the individual and everything he or she stands for. The one time I met Matalin, she was appearing on "Crossfire," to attack President Clinton for going Hollywood. Matalin did a fine job of inveighing against élitist showbiz liberals who disdain the values of ordinary, decent Americans, and so on. Yet she ostentatiously exempted her opponent on the program, the TV producer and Clinton friend Harry Thomason, and, during a commercial break, she turned to him and said, "So, Harry—let's have dinner."

Matalin and Carville, despite their reputations for fierceness, seem incapable of referring to any individual, however critically, without tossing in a little valentine—especially when it comes to members of the press. *Newsweek's* Joe Klein is "a New Paradigm kind of guy . . . very hip." NBC's Tim Russert is a "straight-up guy." Et cetera. CNN, says Carville, in the course of accusing it of bias, is "one of my favorite networks." (How many are there?) Matalin quotes a private conversation with the *Wall Street Journal* reporter John Harwood to illustrate her belief that the press was prejudiced against Bush, and then excuses Harwood himself from the general indictment of the press which she has derived from Harwood's own alleged admission. All these little valentines might be a matter of basic Midwestern decency (or Southern grace, in Carville's case). Or they might be something else. They might be spin.

THE simple solution to the mystery of how Carville and Matalin combine their politics with their private life may be that they don't have much of either. Carville's description of how he became a left-populist Democrat by growing up in the racist South rings true enough, and his discussion of the tradeoff between money and political values that he has to make in deciding which candidates to work for seems forthright and reflective. But Matalin's description of her own political journey is moronic. In high school, she was one of those "ill-informed, ridiculously naïve, liberal Flower Power hippies." In college (this is in the mid-seventies), "flower children . . . were running the joint," and when she visited her father she would "regale him with the virtues of socialism and communism, a hip thing to think at the time." Then she was assigned a term paper on the topic "Is There a Trend Toward Conservatism in the United States?" In the course of her researches, she discovered that "liberal ideas" and "big-government programs" (such as those advocated by Flower Power hippies, presumably) don't work. So she became a conservative. Really, though, Matalin is still a flower child, just floating on the Zeitgeist, her conservatism as lightly worn and trivial as the "socialism and communism" of her liberal past.

Neither Carville nor Matalin even attempts to deal with the obvious conflict between their shared populist posturing and their actual roles as members of the scorned Washington élite. There are the predictable shots at "Washington insiders," and the equally predictable jacket copy touting the authors as "the ultimate insiders." Carville and Matalin self-consciously paint a picture of their life style as a matter of Jeeps and down-home trash talk. Yet—and whether this is spin or the breakdown of spin I'm by now too dizzy to figure out—they also display an obsession with good tables at fashionable restaurants.

What else would you like to know about James and Mary? That James often bursts into tears? That Mary's office is a heroic mess? It is already legend that during the 1990 Senate campaign for Harris Wofford, in Pennsylvania, Carville didn't change his underwear for ten days. In "All's Fair" we learn that he "washed them but didn't change them"—a reassuring bit of corrective spin. Yes, their lives are an open book, and this is it. Perhaps their biggest self-invasion of privacy, though, concerns a matter (Matalin's recent miscarriages) that came too late for the book, but in time for the *Newsweek* cover story.

"James 'n' Mary: The Book" is obviously written for easy translation into "James 'n' Mary: The Movie." The he-said-she-said literary conceit strives for a Tracy-and-Hepburn effect, but the ghostwriter, Knobler, falls short of Garson Kanin and Ruth Gordon. (James: "I don't know. I guess it seems like political women are not as good-looking as in other professions." Mary: "Well, I can understand that, knowing your political women." Har, har.) The back-and-forth technique also raises some ethical problems. It is peculiar enough that book publishers aren't expected to vouch for the accuracy of their products, the way newspaper and magazine publishers are. The convention is that a book publisher is just a conduit for the voice of the author, be she saint or sinner. But when you have two authors taking turns in the same book, and arguing in its pages about some factual question, the effect is especially disconcerting. Or how about when one co-author states something that the other co-author knows to be untrue? Matalin says, regarding a campaign controversy about how often Clinton and Bush had each raised taxes, "Carville . . . got Kinsley to write this column about what a bunch of liars we were." As Carville surely knows, Carville did nothing of the sort. Kinsley dreamed up that column all by his loathsome. Checking with the dread Kinsley might be too much to expect, but Matalin might at least have checked with her own co-author. And what did Carville think when he read this bit of "spin" in a book with his name on it?

As a read, "All's Fair" isn't terrible. Carville has some good lines ("I was carrying all of what I owned in a garment bag that hung from me like everything I'd ever worried about"), and the gum-chewing argot that Matalin adopts has its moments of charm (she talks of "Secret Service agents in a constant state of high freak"). There are some nice war stories, too, like Matalin's tales of the Bush campaign's dealings with a heckler in a chicken costume. At moments like these, the book does convey the smell and feel of a political campaign.

What Carville and Matalin have done, cleverly, is to cut out the middleman. Why give away this rich anecdotage to some journalist, who will turn around and sell it to the public for money? Why not sell the stuff yourself? Ever since 1960, when Theodore H. White invented the Presidential-campaign history, most election cycles have produced some innovative variation on the theme, reflecting innovations in the campaigns themselves. Joe McGinniss's "The Selling of the President 1968" focussed on political advertising. Timothy Crouse's "The Boys on the Bus" (about the 1972 campaign) focussed on the growing role of the press. And so on. "All's Fair" is this year's innovation, and a fitting one. Spin doctors have taken over the campaigns. Why shouldn't they take over the history of them as well?

To be sure, it's one thing for a journalist to point out the artifice of a modern political campaign—the issues concocted in the consultants' laboratory, the sound bites crafted by committee, the institutionalized disingenuousness of the entire process. It's another thing for the perpetrators themselves to report—and, indeed, to revel in—the artifice. It seems shameless. But at least in this one respect, Carville and Matalin are communicating a truth.

The trouble is, they're not merely mining their jobs for valuable nuggets. They are strip-mining their lives. Or, to change commercial metaphors, not only does "James 'n' Mary: The Book" come pre-adapted for "James 'n' Mary: The Movie"—so, it seems, does "James 'n' Mary: The Life." When you've reached the point where you're spinning your underwear, you've left the real you—if there is any—pretty naked. ♦

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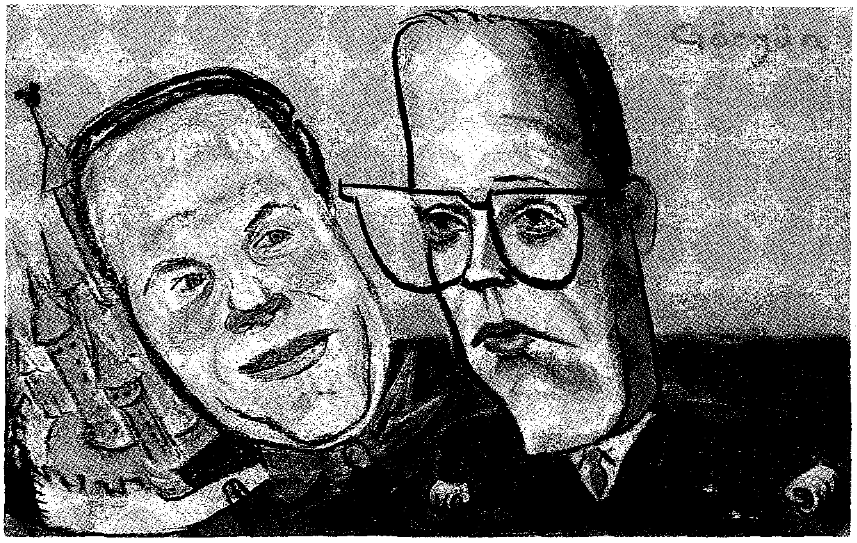
ANNALS OF COMMUNICATIONS

THE HUMAN FACTOR

Michael Eisner and Jeffrey Katzenberg were one of the steadiest and most successful teams in Hollywood. So why did they force a split that neither man wanted?

BY KEN AULETTA

My car phone rang. It was August 30th, and I was on my way to Kennedy Airport to fly to Los Angeles for a dinner with Jeffrey Katzenberg, the chairman of Walt Disney Studios. He had told me earlier by phone that he would give me the real story of why, just six days before, he and Michael Eisner, the chairman of the Walt Disney Company, had announced their divorce. In the phone call I got when I was halfway to Kennedy, Katzenberg cancelled dinner. He explained that Eisner, for whom he had worked a total of eighteen years, both at Disney and, before that, at Paramount Pictures, was furious over comments that Katzenberg's friends had made to the press. In particular, Eisner was furious over what the director Steven Spielberg had said to the Los Angeles *Times:* "Jeffrey Katzenberg's exit will be Michael Eisner's Machiavellian loss—and Corporation X's El Dorado."



Michael Eisner and Jeffrey Katzenberg: "Ambition is a force of nature," an admirer of both men commented.

"I've got to let the situation calm down," Katzenberg said over the car phone. Eisner, he said, had asked him to quiet friends like Spielberg and David Geffen, the billionaire entertainment impresario. The publicity was hurting the company, Eisner had told him. And, Katzenberg felt, it was hurting his own reputation with prospective employers and possibly weakening the leverage he could exert in extracting a generous contract settlement from Eisner. Katzenberg said that if Eisner found out that he and I had met he would rightly feel betrayed. A man who delivered so dependably that he had been nicknamed the Golden Retriever was now mistrusted. "Sorry," Katzenberg said. "The rules have changed. I have given Michael Eisner my word that I'm not going to do any more interviews unless he specifically directs me to."

I phoned Eisner when I returned home. "I'm not ready to discuss it," he said, explaining that after at first talking to reporters he had decided that the company should shut up. Having undergone quadruple heart-bypass surgery just four weeks earlier, he said, he needed rest, and he added, "My wife is ready to kill me." (In the end, Disney officials chose to speak, fearful that Katzenberg

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and his allies were talking to the press.) The one comment Eisner did make about the breakup was that he had to deal with what he referred to as "this thing."

The "thing" he meant had come about on the morning of Wednesday, August 24th—a year after he and Katzenberg went for a walk during a stay in Aspen, Colorado, and first discussed Katzenberg's desire to broaden his role at Disney. Ten years before, when they left Paramount together to take over the moribund Disney, its revenues were a billion four hundred million dollars. In 1993, its revenues were more than eight and a half billion dollars. The pretax profits of the film studio, which Katzenberg ran, jumped from two million dollars in 1984 to about eight hundred million in 1994. Throughout the past decade, no film studio has reported greater profits.

All this helps account for why the announcement on August 24th of Katzenberg's departure from Disney has shocked the entertainment industry. "Stability" is a word that is much invoked but little honored in Hollywood. The best-run studios clearly are those with stable leadership, such as that of Eisner and Katzenberg at Disney, and Robert Daly and Terry Semel, the chairman and the president, respectively, of Warner Bros. Enduring marriages are so rare in Hollywood that when one dissolves the town leaps to attention. Haiti and health care took a back seat to Eisner and Katzenberg, with residents of Hollywood asking, "How could such a successful team fail?"

The failure is in part a tale about relationships, a reminder that the path to the so-called information superhighway is pocked with potholes, many of them man-made. Two gifted entertainment executives ended up in positions and reached conclusions that neither wanted. Both were swayed by pride and a stew of other emotions. As was true when Viacom terminated Richard Snyder as chairman of Simon & Schuster, last June, this breakup was dictated by personalities, not performance—by human more than business factors.

IN 1976, when Katzenberg and Eisner first met, Katzenberg, at twenty-five, was a low-level assistant to Barry Diller, who was then running Paramount Pictures, with Eisner, at thirty-four, as his second-in-command. By most accounts, during the eight years they spent together at Paramount, Eisner saw Katzenberg as a gofer—a short, brusque assistant who wore dark suits, white shirts, and large square glasses and did what he was told. Eisner admired Katzenberg's machine-like efficiency. In 1984, Diller clashed with Paramount's C.E.O., Martin Davis, and left the company. Davis, who barely knew Eisner, chose Frank Mancuso to run the studio. Eisner accepted an offer to become the chairman of Disney, with Frank Wells, who had been vice-chairman at Warner Bros., joining him as president and chief operating officer. Katzenberg was invited to join them as a junior partner. "I told him that Eisner doesn't want a partner," said a former Paramount executive who was close to Eisner and whom Katzenberg consulted. "Michael will never accept you as a partner."

"If I'm good enough, he will," Katzenberg told the executive.

For the next decade, Katzenberg tried to prove his worth. While esteem for him grew in the Hollywood colony, which saw that he had learned to be an able and creative executive, he never felt fully accepted by Eisner. They had a standing business dinner every Monday when both were in town, and yet, Katzenberg told friends, in fifteen years the only social dinner they had together with their wives was during the week after it was decided that he would leave Disney. David Geffen said that Katzenberg, having had an at times distant relationship with his father, "didn't want to be treated as a golden retriever," and added, "He wanted Michael's approval." But Eisner, Geffen went on, having had an aloof father, and having worked for a scold like Diller, apparently found it difficult to give praise. He never complimented Katzenberg for lashing "The Lion King" into shape, Geffen said, even though it is sure to earn Disney a billion dollars. "As tall as he is, he's a little guy," Geffen said of the six-foot-three-inch Eisner.

Katzenberg wanted to be a sounding board, a partner, the way Frank Wells was. He was enthralled with his job, loved coming to the office in jeans and a Mickey Mouse T-shirt, loved taking his wife and twins to Disney World, as he did each September after joining Disney. But, good as he was at his work, he never succeeded in convincing Eisner that he was a wise, well-rounded executive. "A

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golden retriever fetches," a Disney executive who knows both men said recently. "He does not think for himself. He goes in the direction his master wants."

In August of 1993, Eisner, Wells, and Katzenberg went together to Aspen for an industry conference. Within Disney, Wells was known as the diplomat, the man people went to see if they wanted to persuade Eisner to change a decision or if they simply wanted to complain. He also did the unglamorous work—rescheduling corporate debt, negotiating labor contracts, and finding investors to reduce Disney's exposure. Frank Wells was a generous contributor to Democratic candidates, and flirted with the idea of one day running for office—maybe for the Senate. He had already scaled six of the seven highest mountain summits in the world, taking two sabbaticals to do so. His climbing feats implicitly announced to everyone in the company, "My life is not just about work. I compete with myself, not with anyone else." In Aspen, Wells and Eisner agreed on the broad outlines of a new seven-year contract.

Eisner then turned his attention to Katzenberg, telling him he hoped that he, too, would agree to a generous, multiyear contract. The two men talked about how Katzenberg had a month to decide whether to exercise the option in his contract, which would allow him to leave the company in September of 1994. If Katzenberg did not exercise that option, his employment would continue through September of 1996, and he would receive a significant but as yet undefined bonus and stock payment. Katzenberg had been thinking more and more about declining to renew, for he was troubled by what he felt was a growing estrangement from Eisner. Disney was now a behemoth, with interests in film, video, television production, music, books, theme parks, interactive games, consumer products, hotels, real estate. The relationship between Katzenberg and Eisner had become more formal. Although Eisner approved the studio's major productions and often read the scripts, more and more of his time and energy were consumed by a controversial theme park near the site of a Civil War battlefield in Virginia and, especially, by Euro Disney, in France. Building Euro Disney had required an investment of four billion dollars, much of it from outside sources. In the company's 1993 annual report, Eisner candidly described Euro Disney as "our first real financial disappointment," so "dreadful" that he would grade the effort as "barely a *D*." Personal strains added to the business strains. Eisner sometimes felt pushed by Katzenberg, while Katzenberg felt that Eisner resented the fact that the son was straying from the nest. And Katzenberg was now a more visible presence around Hollywood, in contrast to the impeccably anonymous Frank Wells.

Eisner invited Katzenberg to take a walk with him through downtown Aspen. Katzenberg later told an unassailable source about their conversation.

"What do you want?" Eisner asked.

Katzenberg told Eisner that he saw himself as a builder, and he wanted "new mountains to climb." He wanted to be treated as a partner.

Eisner asked if he wanted to be vice-chairman and sit on the Disney board.

Katzenberg said, "Does it make sense for Frank to be vice-chairman and me to be president?"

"No. That would be perceived as a demotion for Frank," Eisner said.

According to the version Katzenberg has related to colleagues, Eisner then said what Katzenberg longed to hear: "If for any reason Frank Wells is not here—if he decides to run for political office, if he goes off to climb the summit—you are the No. 2 person, and I would want you to have his job."

Subsequent events pivot on whether this conversation occurred in fact or only in Katzenberg's imagination. Eisner has denied it. Close Katzenberg associates—among them Geffen, who served as Katzenberg's chief strategist over the following year—insist that Eisner made the promise. Katzenberg can recite for friends the exact site at which Eisner reportedly did so—in front of Boogies, a diner in downtown Aspen. Although Eisner, like any good executive, sometimes says things to stroke his employees' egos, Katzenberg loyalists view him as a liar. "Michael is well known in Hollywood for being careless with the truth," Geffen, who is one of the few Hollywood executives unafraid to speak their minds, said. There is anecdotal evidence for such an interpretation. A former deputy who remains friendly with Eisner remembered that he would make commitments to go ahead with a movie, and then, as soon as the producer left, would tell the deputy, "Get me out of it."

"But he'll say you lied," the deputy would tell him.

Eisner is reported to have replied, "That's not lying. It's business."

This anecdote had a certain resonance, for I remember interviewing Eisner last year, and at the end of our meeting he mentioned a director whose work and politics he abhorred. "He'll never make a picture for Disney," he confided. Coincidentally, that night at an industry dinner I was standing near this director when Eisner approached and said to him, "I love your work. When are you going to make a movie for Disney?" Still, as Eisner might say, that's business. Or, at any rate, that's Hollywood.

A second interpretation is that Katzenberg is not telling the truth. Eisner would never make that pledge to Katzenberg—so say five men who have talked to the Disney chairman about it. They say that Eisner never wavered in his conviction that Katzenberg lacked the scope to be C.O.O.—lacked the kind of broad business experience that Wells had as a business lawyer and as the vice-chairman of Warner Bros. A key Disney board member says, "It's not consistent with the way Michael would have behaved. You don't make decisions in the abstract that far in advance. I don't believe Michael made a blank commitment of that kind. He never told the board, and I believe he would have. The board has given him total support, not just because we respect his abilities but because we're never surprised. If Jeffrey believes he heard it, I think he misinterpreted it."

What is clear is that, at age forty-three, Katzenberg was determined to enlarge his portfolio of responsibility. As was true of Eisner a decade earlier, when they both worked at Paramount, he wanted a bigger job. Katzenberg, who had had only a year of college, worked to expand his range of knowledge. He read, including books on management. Known as a ruthless cost-cutter and a micromanager of movie production, he struggled to be more sensitive. He talked freely to reporters, and was widely admired for his candor. He socialized with his peers, taking rafting and other outdoor trips with fellow-executives. He

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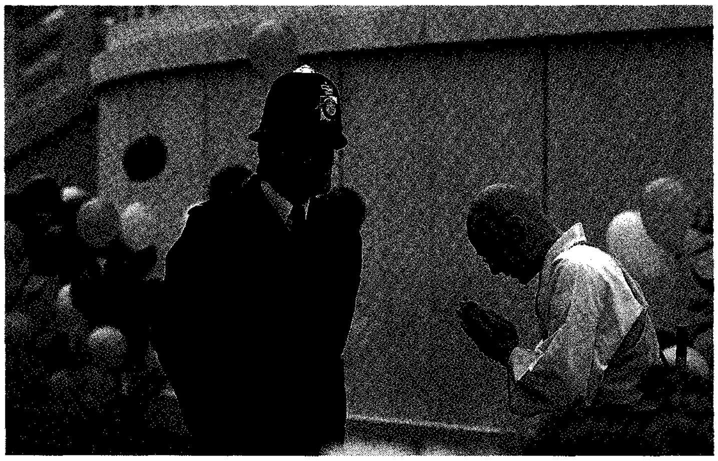

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Greetings take many forms throughout the city.

Museums

The Design Museum

28 Shad Thames, London SE1. Tel: 071-407-6261. Tower Bridge Tube. Close to Tower Bridge, the spectacularly sited Design Museum overlooks the Thames from the redeveloped docks and warehouses of the south bank of the river.

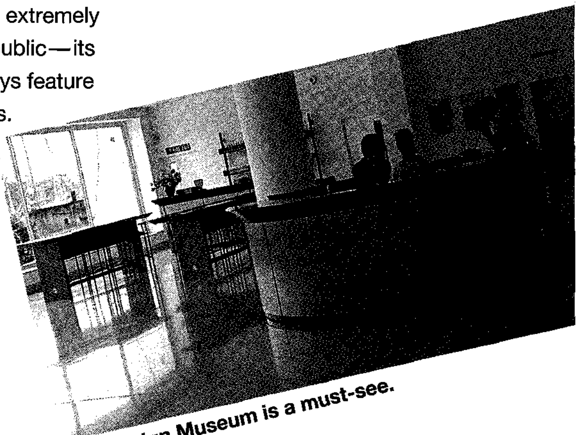
The Museum of the Moving Image

South Bank, London SE1. Tel: 071-401-2636. Waterloo Tube. The newest addition to the South Bank arts complex, MOMI has proved extremely popular with the public—its imaginative displays feature interactive exhibits.

Theatre

Donmar Warehouse

Thomas Neal's Earlham Street, London WC2. Tel: 071-867-1150. Covent Garden Tube. London's fringe theatre is seldom a disappointment and is often totally exhilarating. Top of the list is the Donmar Warehouse, an exceptionally versatile space in London's Covent Garden, which is currently playing Noel Coward's *Design For Living*—a period piece directed for a contemporary audience.



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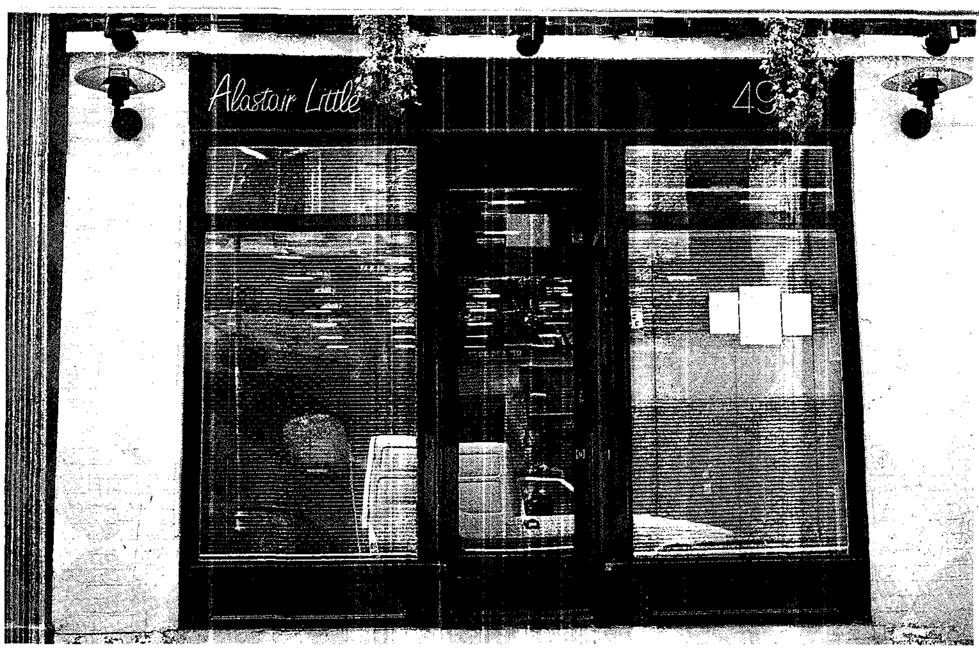

Sean Nolan

Sean Nolan

For fine food and great atmosphere, try Alastair Little's, in Soho.

The Royal Court Theatre

Sloane Square, London SW1. Box office: 071-730-1745. Sloane Square Tube. For many years the venue for new writing, the Royal Court continues to enjoy a reputation for challenging, lively productions.

The Gate

11 Pembridge Road, London W11. Tel: 071-229-0706. Notting Hill Gate Tube. The Gate theatre is more in keeping with most people's idea of fringe. Cramped and airless, the theatre is an extremely tight space above the Gate pub, but it is worth keeping an eye on, as it has boasted some of London's greatest new acting talents over the years. It is currently showing *Black Sail, White Sail* by Helen Cixous.

Galleries

Whitechapel

Whitechapel High Street, London EC1. Tel: 071-377-0107. Aldgate East Tube. The Whitechapel art gallery has gone from strength to strength since the turn of the century when this stunning Art Nouveau building became one of London's most thrilling gallery spaces.

Nightlife

Alastair Little

49 Frith Street, London W1. Tel: 071-734-5183. Leicester Square Tube. Bang in the heart of Soho—a veritable haven of fabulous Italian, French, Chinese, and Thai cuisine—shines the multi-talented British chef, Alastair Little. Although he is ostensibly a traditionalist, his food is also eclectic and utterly delicious. Despite the influx of a wonderful array of new restaurants in Soho, Little still maintains his position as one of the top chefs working in this busy part of London.

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A visit to Abbey Road Studios gives you the opportunity to re-create the Beatles walk.

Megatripolis

Heaven, Under the Arches, Villiers Street, London WC2. Tel: 071-839-3852. Charing Cross Tube. In one of London's longest running nightclubs, Megatripolis on a Thursday night is the club experience for out-of-towners. Especially interesting for Americans who have not taken up this new clubland phenomenon, Megatripolis is a high energy, high tech, techno-trancey club frequented by a laid back, ambient crowd.

The Globe

103 Talbot Road, London W2. Westbourne Park Tube. An old haunt of Mick Jagger's, the Globe, in London's Portobello district is a true after-hours watering hole. Known only to the natives who live in this seedy area of fashionable Notting Gate, the Globe looks decidedly CLOSED from the outside with frayed paintwork, billstickers and graffiti. Press a buzzer and you are admitted to this miniscule club (it is not a place for the claustrophobic), which stays open until 3:00 a.m. with a full bar and for a cover charge of between £2-£5 (depending on the night). The Globe is a fabulous respite from London's rather archaic drinking laws.

Special Attractions

Abbey Road Studios

3 Abbey Road, St. John's Wood, London NW3. Tel: 071-286-1161. St. John's Wood Tube. Graffiti the outside wall, stalk stars, and generally taste the air around one of London's most famous recording studios. Immortalized on the cover of the Beatles' album "Abbey Road," this studio has been home to all the big names in music from Elgar to Duran Duran. Although visitors cannot tour around the recording rooms, thousands make the pilgrimage to this rock monument and scrawl their tributes on the white-washed wall outside.

Streetstyle

Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, London SW7. Tel: 071-938-8407. South Kensington Tube. From November 16, 1994 to February 19, 1995, the Victoria and Albert Museum in South Kensington is mounting a huge exhibition of street style from the past, present, and future. In an explosive show which is set to make a whole generation smile, the exhibition covers clothing stitched since the 1940s and highlights examples of street style from all over the world, enhanced with accessories, photographs, and music of the same eras. Definitely a show not to be missed!

Polly Arnold is a free-lance writer who used to live in the United States but is now firmly ensconced in London life.

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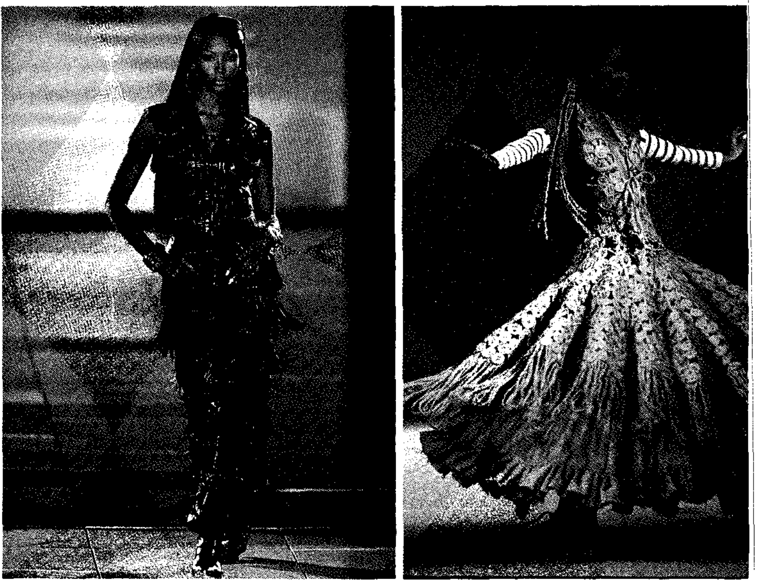

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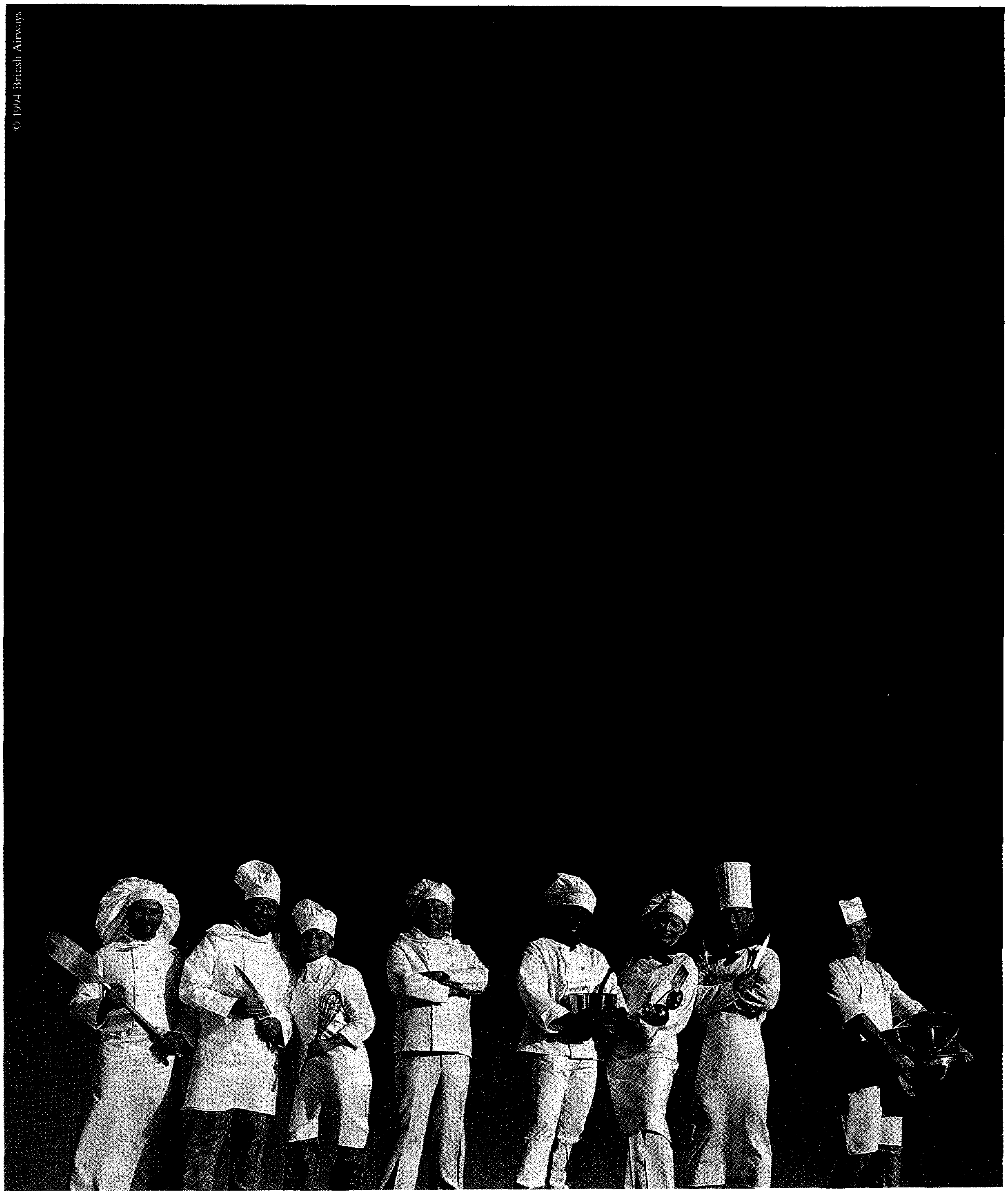

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thought of himself as becoming more relaxed, more social, though that is not always what associates thought. "Jeffrey's never had a social dinner with anyone," says a longtime Disney executive who is aware that Katzenberg sometimes had three different guests at a meal but asked each to wait while he completed his allotted half hour or so with each of the others. "Even when Jeffrey goes rafting, it's business. It's bonding—so that when they get back to town they can do business. This town is not particularly good at real friendships."

By 1993, Katzenberg had become more visible—as an executive with a wide circle of friends, as a fund-raiser for AIDS causes and Democratic politicians, as a political presence in Washington, as a Hollywood potentate. But he craved new challenges. And he craved Michael Eisner's approval. So, to test the relationship, when lawyers notified Katzenberg that if he did not exercise his option and stayed in his contract through 1996 he would receive a hundred million dollars in bonuses and stock options, Katzenberg stunned Eisner by declining.

KATZENBERG had decided to call Eisner's hand. If he did not have a new mountain to climb in the remaining year of his contract, he would leave, he said. This refusal, associates said, proved Katzenberg's sincerity and his lack of greed. The Disney director Stanley P. Gold, who had helped recruit Eisner and Wells for Disney, said, however, that the refusal is proof that Eisner could not have told Katzenberg in Aspen that he would one day get Wells's job. "I believe that Jeffrey's giving notice shortly after this alleged conversation is proof that it never occurred," he told me. "If it had occurred, I can't imagine that Jeffrey would, within thirty days thereafter, give Michael and the company notice that he was leaving." Indeed, the chronology of the Aspen walk and Katzenberg's giving notice, a month later, is the most compelling argument that Eisner did not lie.

Katzenberg's retort is that he was hoping not to leave. Between September of 1993 and April of this year, he became ever more publicly visible. "When Jeffrey could not get recognition inside, he went outside," a Katzenberg aide said. Eisner, unsurprisingly, did not much like feeling pressured. Nevertheless, during this period the two men spoke of their joint search for new challenges. Eisner asked Katzenberg to spearhead Disney's attempts to become a major Broadway producer by taking over a theatre and launching the effort with a stage adaptation of "Beauty and the Beast." They talked about Disney's buying a television network—a proposal that Katzenberg fervently supported. Both men were hopeful about their chances of reaching an accommodation. In fact, a member of the board's compensation committee recalls that by late winter he was confident that Katzenberg would sign a new contract. "It was my impression from discussions with Frank Wells that we had just about closed up with Jeffrey on a new contract," the Disney board member said.

Fate intervened on Easter Sunday, when Frank Wells died, in a helicopter accident in Nevada. The next day, Eisner abruptly announced at a staff luncheon in the company's Burbank headquarters that he would assume the duties and title of president. It was a way of reassuring nervous investors that, as a one-page press release issued on April 4th said, "we have in place a strong management structure that will carry Disney forward."

Katzenberg had admired Wells, as had almost everyone in the room, but, still, he was focussed on himself. He seethed. "I don't think I blinked for the entire lunch," he told an associate. He had been in his office down the hall since six-thirty that morning, yet Eisner had told him nothing. He thought he was Eisner's partner, he told friends, yet, despite eighteen years of working together, despite their conversation in Aspen, he had been treated as an appendage. During the meeting, he fought to keep his composure. "If he had assured me, privately, that it didn't mean anything, fine," Katzenberg told an unassailable source. "But by his actions Michael assured me that he meant everything. It told me that he wouldn't share with me."

That night, the two men had their regularly scheduled Monday business dinner at Locanda Veneta, on Third Street in Beverly Hills. They talked about Wells, and then about some business matters. Both men were shaken by Wells's death. The subject of Katzenberg's role never surfaced. He told one source that it was Eisner's place to raise it. Perhaps, a close Katzenberg friend suggested, he was afraid to confront his figurative father. Although Katzenberg

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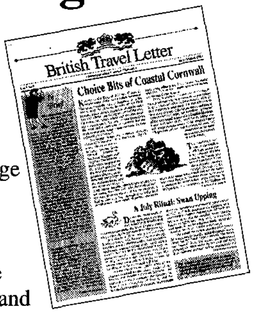

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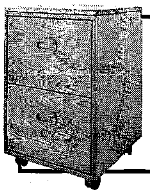

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normally sleeps well, that night he restlessly prowled through his house. An image was building in his mind that Eisner was condescending to him, he told friends.

The next morning, for the first time in ten years at Disney, a visibly angry Katzenberg told Eisner's secretary it was important that he and Eisner lunch that day. Eisner got the message, and they met in a private corporate dining room. Katzenberg wasted no time, as he later told friends, recounting the conversation in detail. "You had promised it to me," he said to Eisner. "I don't understand what you're doing. I don't understand your putting out that press release without talking to me. I don't understand why you said nothing at dinner. I don't understand why, after eighteen years, you wouldn't first talk to me. If you don't want to do what was promised, I'm leaving."

Eisner was furious, and is said to have retorted, "You're putting a gun to my head."

"No, I'm just holding you to your promise."

"Are you telling me that if I don't do this you'll leave?" Eisner is said to have asked, incredulous at what he saw as immature, insensitive behavior.

"I want you to do what you said you wanted to do," Katzenberg responded. Later, Katzenberg informed his friend David Geffen that at the end of lunch he said to Eisner, "I'm going to leave."

The luncheon meeting left both men enraged. Katzenberg thought that Eisner had reneged on a promise made in Aspen. He felt deeply wounded, and couldn't fathom why Eisner would ignore him. Eisner thought that Katzenberg was audaciously disloyal to Wells, not unlike Shakespeare's Richard III murdering Prince Edward and immediately wooing Edward's wife. Even Katzenberg's most ardent supporters, though they believed he had reason to be upset, thought that he had pushed too hard too soon—had given ammunition to his detractors that he was not fit to succeed Wells. Thus a business virtue—that he pushed hard—became a personal liability.

At a meeting in April, Eisner apprised his board of the conversation. Most of the directors were livid. "I didn't think it was appropriate," one of the more temperate directors said. "We had to digest an enormous loss. Frank's body wasn't off the mountain yet. It exhibited bad taste and judgment." Harsher words were spoken by Roy Disney, the board's vice-chairman and the one director who really knew Katzenberg, from their work together on animated films, and who could not abide him, and said so. Obviously, Katzenberg protested to associates, Eisner had never told the board that he'd been promised the job. And, because he wasn't on the board and had failed to court its members as allies, his side went unheard.

The board members began to think that they might not be able to satisfy Katzenberg's desire for a bigger job. Meanwhile, Katzenberg was becoming more and more pessimistic. "He said from the beginning that Michael would be unwilling to share, to make him his junior partner," Geffen recalled. "I said, 'No way. He won't risk losing you.' "

Katzenberg, goaded by Geffen—whom many in Hollywood came to blame for reinforcing Katzenberg's combative tendencies—hardened his position: he wanted Frank Wells's title. Eisner, goaded by his board, was determined not to give it to him. Eisner kept Wells's office, which adjoined his own, empty for months. For Eisner, Wells was irreplaceable. While the clock on Katzenberg's contract was running down, the two longtime associates were drifting apart. Katzenberg cared about the title, and wanted confirmation of his own stature. Eisner didn't want to give the title, because he told his board that he didn't see Katzenberg as the kind of astute partner that Wells had been. A key Disney director said of Katzenberg's being named C.O.O., "It would be a waste for him to do that job. In a large sense, Jeffrey's job as chairman of the studio was a more important job than Frank's job. It would be silly to dilute his effectiveness as chairman of the studio. Frank's job involved so much detail—hard, technical kinds of things."

The real plotline here is about two people who are "married," a friend of both Eisner and Katzenberg observed. "And suddenly one party says to the other, 'You're used to my staying home all these years. Now I want to go out.' " On top of this, the friend added, Eisner was like a jealous spouse, "threatened" by Katzen-

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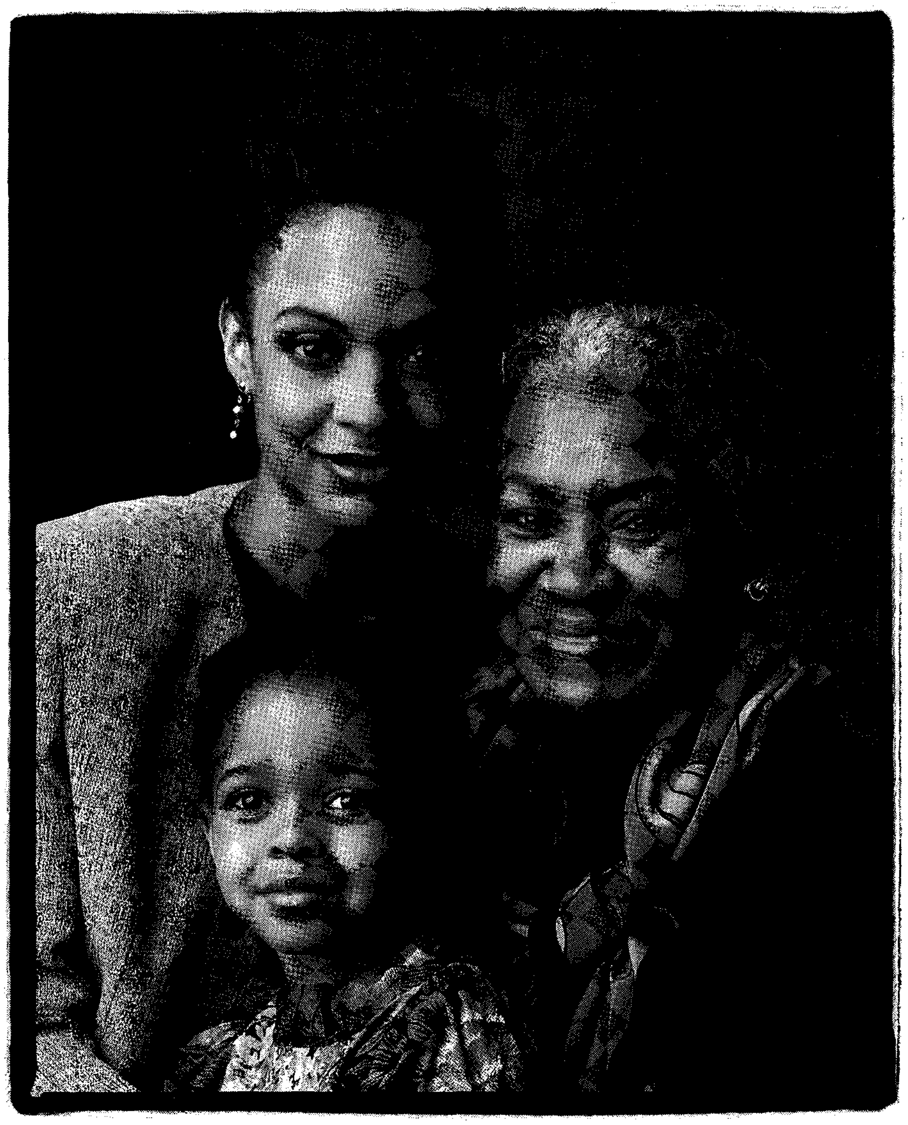

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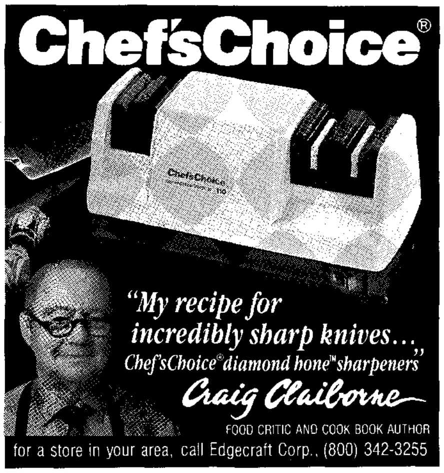
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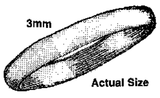

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berg's declaration of independence and his enhanced public profile.

Nevertheless, with Wells gone, Eisner did confer more power on Katzenberg—"more trinkets" is how Katzenberg described it to friends. He gave Katzenberg responsibility for Hollywood Records, and for Disney's efforts to promote interactivity with electronic games and its prospective linkups with the Baby Bell telephone companies. More responsibility was accompanied by more anxiety, and produced ambivalence in both men. However embittered their relationship was becoming, at moments both Eisner and Katzenberg still thought that something could be worked out. They agreed to resolve this matter in August of 1994, when both could get away from the office.

Then, once again, fate intervened, when, on July 15th, specialists told Eisner that his heart was weak, and that he must immediately undergo a heart-bypass operation. The next day, doctors performed a quadruple bypass on Eisner. Katzenberg, according to an aide, learned of the operation when he phoned Eisner at home to give him the weekend movie grosses, and Eisner's wife, Jane, said, "Oh, Jeffrey, I meant to call you." By contrast, Roy Disney had been notified the day before, and had rushed to the hospital from a castle he owns in Ireland. A press release announced that Roy Disney, not Katzenberg, would be Eisner's stand-in. Soon stories appeared in the press that Katzenberg might leave if he didn't get Frank Wells's job—stories that Eisner's champions attributed to Katzenberg. A friend who visited Eisner at the hospital said, "He was lying in a hospital bed, tubes coming out of every part of his body, drifting in and out of consciousness, and when he's awake he sees that he's being pushed and pushed in the press."

Eisner appeared to push back. On August 1st, *Newsweek* published an interview that Eisner had given a month before his bypass operation, in which he said that the company would now be "modelled after Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. In other words: a powerful C.E.O. without a strong second-in-command." Eisner added that the plan was the "suggestion" of Roy Disney. *Time* reported in its August 1st issue that Eisner and the board "may solicit a list of outside candidates as early as this week" to fill Wells's post.

Not surprisingly, Katzenberg was despondent. He took the first week of August off and holed up at his house in Malibu. "By this point, Jeffrey was retreating from his role as the perfect corporate citizen," according to his close friend Jim Wiatt, the president of International Creative Management, who visited Katzenberg during this period. "He was starting to say, 'I'm getting tired of not being dealt with.' He felt he had to force a confrontation."

And so he did. The timing was atrocious, so soon after Eisner's operation that he had not returned to the office. Eisner felt pressure to settle up with Katzenberg, and invited him to his home, in Bel Air, one evening during the second week of August. Eisner told Katzenberg that he was agitated by press stories that Katzenberg was pushing for a bigger job and a better title. Katzenberg is said to have told friends that he had cut Eisner off and said, "I never told Frank Wells how much I liked working with him and how much I loved him. I realize I've never told you how much you've meant to me." So he told Eisner how much he admired him and how thankful he was for all he had learned. But Eisner was given reason to question whether the "love" was real when Katzenberg concluded, "Having told you all that, it's also time for me to move on."

"Have you taken a job?" Eisner asked.

"No."

"Is it something we can discuss?" Eisner asked.

"We can talk about it, Michael, but I suspect that the decision is carved in stone by other people." He knew that he was isolated from the board, and instead of blaming himself he blamed Eisner for keeping him on a leash. He continued, "Roy Disney is hostile to me. You think I want to go into a board meeting and know that I don't have the complete support of Roy Disney or Stanley Gold, or know that the only reason I'm there is that you shoved this down their throat?"

Eisner knew he had received an ultimatum. He tried to buy some time. He asked Katzenberg to put down on paper what he saw as his role, how he would define the partnership he sought, how he would reorganize the company, what executives he would replace, what corporate acquisitions and strategy he would recommend. In brief, Eisner wanted Katzenberg to crystallize something that they had often discussed: how to reinvent Disney.

Over the next ten days, Katzenberg drafted a four-page memorandum, but even as he did so he was dubious whether a partnership could work. He was torn. Intellectually, he didn't believe that Eisner would share power, yet he knew that Eisner did not want to lose someone whose movie and television divisions generated half of Disney's pretax profits. Emotionally, he wanted to escape from Eisner's shadow, yet he believed in the Disney family. He had a love-hate relationship with Eisner and a love-hate relationship with his current job. He was on a ledge, wanting—and not wanting—to jump.

On August 24th, Eisner pushed Katzenberg off the ledge. In a calculated show of strength that allowed him to take control of the situation, Eisner summoned Katzenberg to his office and, in what both men have described as a relatively amicable conversation, said that there was no way to reconcile their positions. Katzenberg had brought along his four-page memo but never got to present it. Instead, Eisner handed Katzenberg a draft of a press release, and asked him to review it. The release, to go out that day, would announce not only Katzenberg's departure but also a new, decentralized reorganization, which would split Katzenberg's job responsibilities into three parts—live-action motion pictures, the animation division, and television and telecommunication services.

"I saw the seeds of division between Jeffrey and Michael," I was told by William M. Mechanic, who left Paramount with both men and worked at Disney until a year ago, when he was named president of Twentieth Century Fox. "But, because of business interests, I didn't think it would come to this." Business logic dictated that they remain a team; human logic dictated something else. Michael Eisner felt a need to terminate what had become a draining relationship. At first, both men felt a measure of relief that their ordeal was over. But the emotion was short-lived. The initial reaction among Katzenberg's many loyalists was that Eisner had been ruthless. "It was about as cold as could be," one Disney staff member said of their parting, not knowing that Katzenberg had been equally cold in pressing Eisner for Wells's job. What is missing in the horror that has been expressed over Katzenberg's termination is a sense of irony. Katzenberg was not shy when it came to terminating employees and slashing costs. "No one could do cold and callous better than Jeffrey," a longtime Disney executive who respected him recalled. "He was as tough and as mean as anyone in business."

At Disney, the initial anger over the rupture was mixed with tears—genuine tears, for Katzenberg was also admired as a leader who was generous with praise and bonuses, who remembered names and birthdays. "In a world where no one has a heart, he is wonderfully protective and humorous, despite his reputation," said Harvey Weinstein, the co-chairman of Miramax, whose successful film company Katzenberg had persuaded Eisner to acquire last year. When Katzenberg took his family to Disney World during Labor Day week, the entire animation department surprised him with a keg of his favorite drink (Diet Coke) and pre-

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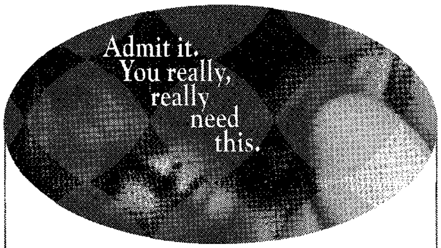

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sented him with a huge drawing showing Katzenberg surrounded by the animated Disney characters that they had created together over the past decade. Then two hundred and fifty members of the department formed a line so that he could sign their "Lion King" books or drawings. Katzenberg's wife, Marilyn, stood to one side and cried.

During the tearful interlude, however, the spin patrols were at work. Eisner talked to reporters. "This is not a Shakespearean tragedy," he told the Los Angeles *Times*. "This is people moving on with their lives, and doing new and interesting things." The press release had said, "With heartfelt thanks and obvious regret, I wish him well in his future endeavors," and Eisner played the breakup as the growing pains of a child who was intent on finding his own apartment. Katzenberg wanted his job, Eisner coolly suggested, and it wasn't available. As chief executive, he had made the necessary tough-minded decision. Eisner, having lost a president and undergone a heart-bypass operation, wanted to convey the notion that this was an inevitable split and that Disney remained strong. Ironically, after a burst of orchestrated outrage from friends, Katzenberg, for different reasons, shared that aim. The audience he had his eye on, he told friends, was the communications executives who attended conferences such as the one that the investment banker Herbert Allen, Jr., held annually, and to which he has regularly been invited. Katzenberg did not want to look to this audience like a non-team player, a whiner. He needed to take the high road. "The way I handle this speaks to what my character is," he told friends. A second business reason that Katzenberg sought to mute criticism of Eisner or Disney was that he hoped to get what he told friends was "a king's ransom" from Disney as a contract settlement. Although his contract was to expire at the end of September, Disney, as he interpreted it, owed him a generous exit payment, because he enjoyed profit participation. A number of his projects, including "The Lion King," swelled his line of credit.

The contract-settlement discussions got ugly. Eisner did not think he owed Katzenberg any money, he told me in a telephone conversation when I was in California in early September. He did not budge from his insistence that he would not treat this parting as a "gossipy, tabloid event," and said, "I'm not going to give you the opposite view from David Geffen's. What does he know about this?" But one view he would share was that Disney owed no payment to Katzenberg. "His contract is over," he said. "When people's contracts are over, they're over."

Did he owe Katzenberg money?

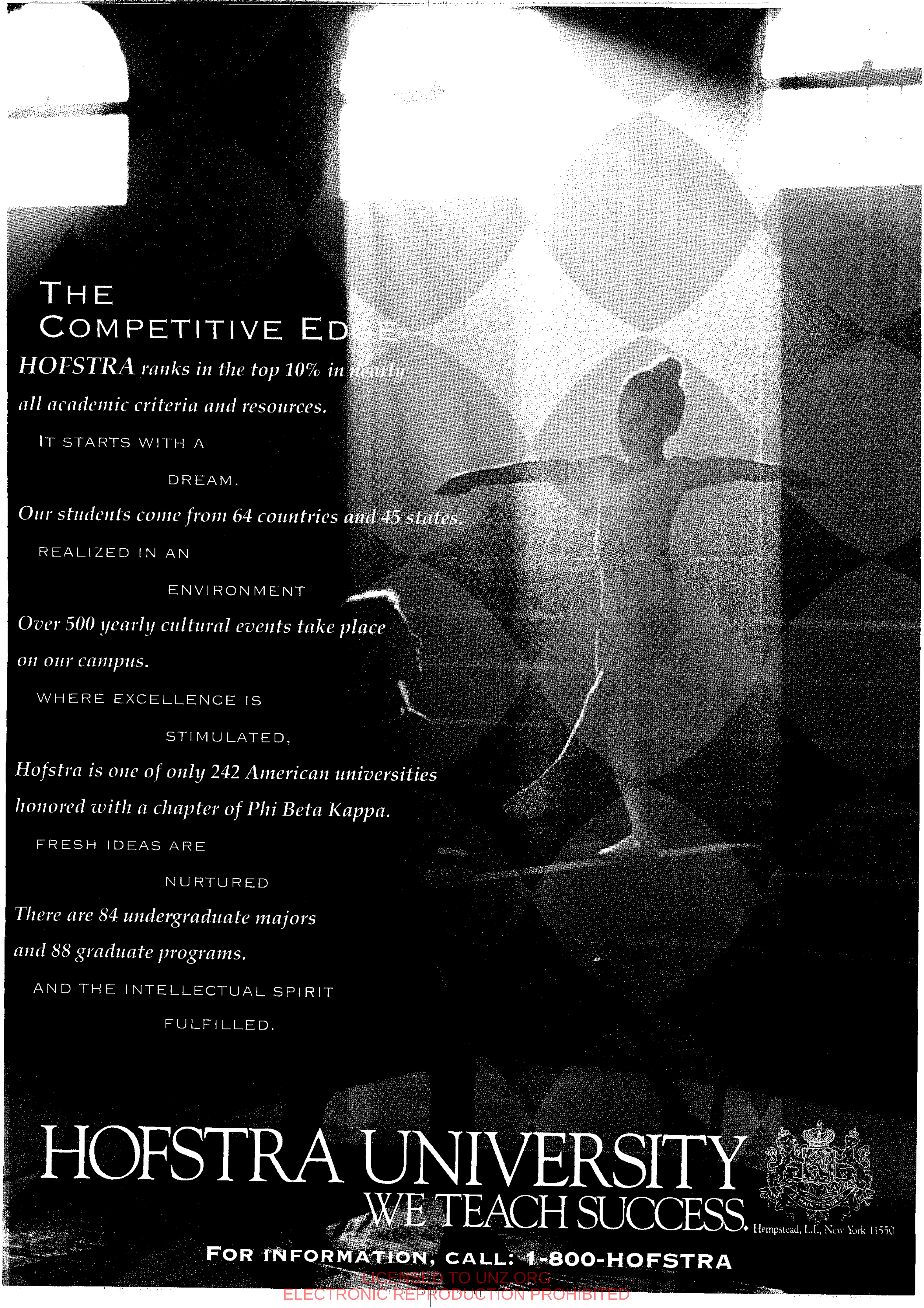
"Not in my mind," he replied.

Because Katzenberg felt otherwise, he quietly retained a noted Hollywood lawyer, Bert Fields. Katzenberg set a September 9th deadline for reaching an accord, and then amended it. While Katzenberg was at Disney World, a Disney lawyer asked Katzenberg's staff how fast he could vacate his offices—an inquiry that was blown up into "They asked him to leave!" So exclaimed a Katzenberg friend on September 8th. Geffen warned that if Eisner didn't work out a settlement "he's going to have to tell the truth under oath about everything." He added, "Eisner's lack of kindness, lack of generosity, and inability to give credit were simply shameful." Katzenberg, although he did not believe that Eisner had known of the lawyer's call about vacating his office, felt "debilitated," an associate said.

On Saturday, September 10th, Eisner softened the hurt by visiting Katzenberg at home. Katzenberg told an unassailable source that he was determined to stop playing the role of supplicant; he told Eisner that the ball was in his court and that he would wait for a settlement proposal, to which he would then give one of two responses—either "Yes" or "Talk to my lawyer."

WHAT should have remained a private business difficulty instead escalated into a messy public divorce. The Disney split has unsettled Hollywood. "This is the biggest Hollywood story I've seen since I took over *Premiere*," said Susan Lyne, who has been the editor of the magazine ever since she launched it, in 1987. "It is the end of the most successful twenty-year partnership in Hollywood. And it sent out ripples throughout the industry. Wherever Jeffrey goes, he will replace someone." And his departure will remind all those in the entertainment colony of their fickle life.

"There wasn't a person in this town



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Note: If response card is missing, send your request to THE NEW YORKER, P.O. Box 5347, Pittsfield, MA 01203-9892. Offer valid until December 19, 1994. 940926 who didn't look in the mirror and say, 'If it can happen to Katzenberg, it can happen to me,' " a Hollywood agent said.

There are also possible consequences for Disney. "It's a major loss," said Stanley Gold, who has been harshly critical of Katzenberg. "He's a talented fellow who helped drive that department"—the Disney studio—"to new heights. He will be replaced, as all managers are replaced. But to suggest there is no loss? You won't get that from me."

While Joe Roth, Katzenberg's successor as studio chief, is respected in Hollywood, a longtime Disney producer who admires both Katzenberg and Eisner said, the loss of Katzenberg will be felt by producers and directors and writers, for they will now be confused about what projects to take to Disney. "Jeffrey imparted a world view," he said. "It's what made the place work. If you couldn't put into a fifteen-second tease why people should see this, we shouldn't make it. It's another way of saying 'high concept.' "

The departure of Katzenberg could also have an impact on Disney's strategy. Eisner has been criticized for being too cautious about acquisitions, and certainly Katzenberg tried to get him to open Disney's wallet and buy a network to guarantee the distribution of Disney's television products. But Eisner has argued publicly that, as long as access to the so-called information superhighway is available to all, Disney needn't invest in a delivery system. Whether the delivery system of the future is a phone wire or a cable wire, over the air or over direct-broadcast satellites, a computer screen or a wireless system, he says, none will dare shut out Disney as long as it stays a software factory.

Perhaps as a way of demonstrating Disney's stature—of telling the world that his heart is strong and that Katzenberg's departure has been taken in stride—Eisner has made a major move in the last two weeks: according to three executives who say they know, Disney has entered negotiations with General Electric to acquire NBC. In urging me to wait with this story, Eisner suggested that if I did I would glimpse Disney's true strategy, because there were deals pending. "There are a lot of things changing in our company that will be helpful to you," he declared. But Rupert Murdoch, the Fox chairman, told me, "The problem for Michael is this: he has to keep making the same contribution to the company he personally made over the last ten years. And not try to do Frank Wells's job. Not that he'd be bad at it. But he can get people to do that."

It is also possible that Jeffrey Katzenberg will return as a competitor. But what studio job is open to him? Right now, there doesn't seem to be a studio vacancy. Besides, Katzenberg insists that he wants to run more than just a studio—an ambition that could limit his options. Murdoch, on being asked if he would hire Katzenberg for Fox, said, "He wouldn't come here except for my job!" But he added, "Anyone would love to have Jeffrey working for him."

Nevertheless, as the recent aspirations of other entertainment executives have demonstrated, one needs deep pockets to be a mogul. If Barry Diller were a billionaire rather than a millionaire, he would probably own CBS or another network. Since Katzenberg is without really deep pockets, a friend of his said, "the problem is that he has to wait for the job that he wants, and then has to wait to be asked."

This Hollywood tale is another reminder that intangibles often matter more than tangibles like profit and loss or business strategy or so-called synergies. Jeffrey Katzenberg left a big job for reasons having to do more with psychology and personal chemistry than with performance. He wanted a bigger job and a better title, and those desires might have been finessed by Eisner. The head of a major studio remarked, "I would have said, 'Jeffrey, you can have the title. You are my designated No. 2. But don't stop making movies.' " But then Katzenberg would have had to finesse his rage. Another Hollywood figure said, "If I had been asked for advice, I would have told Jeffrey not to play hardball when Michael was vulnerable"—after Wells's death and Eisner's heart operation. "Jeffrey should have said, 'I'm here for you.' I would have told him that patience pays off." In any case, the die had been cast by midsummer. Katzenberg and Eisner had taken positions they couldn't back away from, and maybe didn't want to back away from. As a result, Katzenberg left a job that he loved and Disney lost a talented executive that it didn't want to lose. Primal forces were at work, which could not be controlled by the mind. "Ambition is a force of nature," an admirer of both men commented. "It goes back to Richard III." ♦

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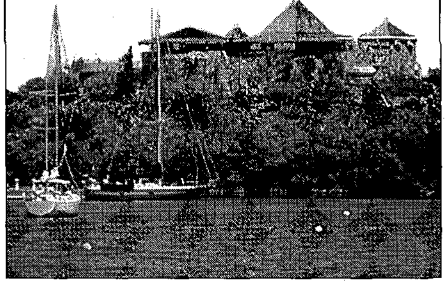

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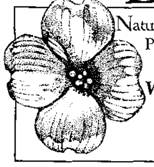

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CLOSE READINGS

ON GRIEF AND REASON

Why is Robert Frost the quintessential American poet?
He used to be lauded as a homespun Yankee nature bard. But, as a fellow-poet explains,
that view was founded on a misreading of what Frost was all about.

BY JOSEPH BRODSKY

I SHOULD tell you that what follows is a spinoff of a seminar given four years ago at the Collège International de Philosophie, in Paris. Hence a certain breeziness to the pace; hence, too, the paucity of biographical material—irrelevant, in my view, to the analysis of a work of art in general, and particularly where a foreign audience is concerned. In any case, the pronoun "you" in these pages stands for those ignorant of or poorly acquainted with the lyrical and narrative strengths of the poetry of Robert Frost. But, first, some basics.

Robert Frost was born in 1874 and died in 1963, at the age of eighty-eight. One marriage, six children; fairly strapped when young; farming, and, later, teaching jobs in various schools. Not much travelling until late in his life; he mostly resided on the East Coast, in New England. If biography accounts for poetry, this one should have resulted in none. Yet he published nine books of poems; the second one, "North of Boston," which came out when he was forty, made him famous. That was in 1914.

After that, his sailing was a bit smoother. But literary fame is not exactly popularity. As it happens, it took the Second World War to bring Frost's work to the general public's notice. In 1943, the Council on Books in Wartime distributed fifty thousand copies of Frost's "Come In" to United States troops stationed overseas, as a morale-builder. By 1955, his "Selected Poems" was in its fourth edition, and one could speak of his poetry's having acquired national standing.

It did. In the course of nearly five decades following the publication of "North of Boston," Frost reaped every possible reward and honor an American poet can get; shortly before Frost's death, John Kennedy invited him to read a poem at the Inauguration ceremony. Along with recognition naturally came a great deal of envy and resentment, a substantial contribution to which emerged from the pen of Frost's own biographer. And yet both the adulation and resentment had one thing in common: a nearly total misconception of what Frost was all about.

He is generally regarded as the poet of the countryside, of rural settings—as a folksy, crusty, wisecracking old gentleman farmer, generally of positive disposition. In short, as American as apple pie. To be fair, he greatly enhanced this notion by projecting precisely this image of himself in numerous public appearances and interviews throughout his career. I suppose it wasn't that difficult for him to do, for he had those qualities in him as well. He was indeed a quintessential American poet; it is up to us, however, to find out what that quintessence is made of, and what the term "American" means as applied to poetry and, perhaps, in general.

In 1959, at a banquet thrown in New York on the occasion of Robert Frost's eighty-fifth birthday, the most prominent literary critic at that time, Lionel Trilling, rose and declared that Robert Frost was "a terrifying poet." That, of course, caused a certain stir, but the epithet was well chosen.

Now, I want you to make the distinction here between terrifying and tragic. Tragedy, as you know, is always a fait accompli, whereas terror always has to do with anticipation, with man's recognition of his own negative potential—with his sense of what he is capable of. And it is the latter that was Frost's forte, not the former. In other words, his posture is radically different from the Continental tradition of the poet as tragic hero. And that difference alone makes him—for want of a better term—American.

On the surface, he looks very positively predisposed toward his surroundings—particularly toward nature. His fluency, his "being versed in country things" alone can produce this impression. However, there is a difference between the way a European perceives nature and the way an American does. Addressing this difference, W. H. Auden, in his short essay on Frost, suggests something to the effect that when a European conceives of confronting nature, he walks out of his cottage or a little inn, filled with either friends or family, and goes for an evening stroll. If he encounters a tree, it's a tree made familiar by history, to which it's been a witness. This or that king sat underneath it, laying down this or that law—something of that sort. A tree stands there rustling, as it were, with allusions. Pleased and somewhat pensive, our man, refreshed but unchanged by that encounter, returns to his inn or cottage, finds his friends or family absolutely intact, and proceeds to have a good, merry time. Whereas when an American walks out of his house and encounters a tree it is a meeting of equals. Man and tree face each other in their respective primal power, free of references: neither has a past, and as to whose future is greater, it is a toss-up. Basically, it's epidermis meeting bark. Our man returns to his cabin in a state of bewilderment, to say the least, if not in actual shock or terror.

Now, this is obviously a romantic caricature, but it accentuates the features, and that's what I am after here. In any case, the second point could be safely billed as the gist of Robert Frost's

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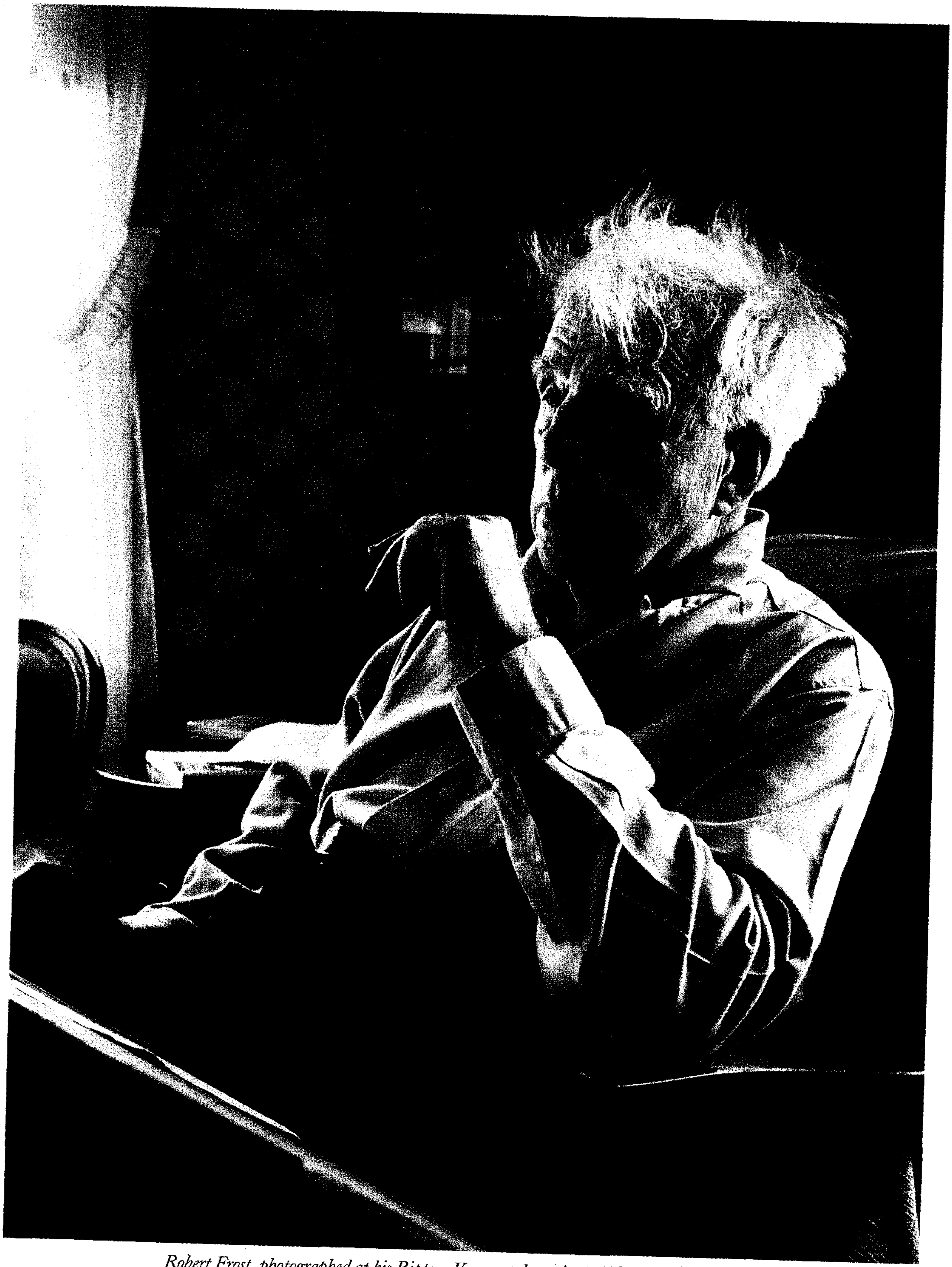


Robert Frost, photographed at his Ripton, Vermont, home in 1955 by Alfred Eisenstaedt.

COME IN

As I came to the edge of the woods,
Thrush music—hark!
Now if it was dusk outside,
Inside it was dark.

Too dark in the woods for a bird
By sleight of wing
To better its perch for the night,
Though it still could sing.

The last of the light of the sun
That had died in the west
Still lived for one song more
In a thrush's breast.

Far in the pillared dark
Thrush music went—
Almost like a call to come in
To the dark and lament.

But no, I was out for stars:
I would not come in.
I meant not even if asked,
And I hadn't been.

—ROBERT FROST

nature poetry. Nature for this poet is neither friend nor foe, nor is it the backdrop for human drama; it is this poet's terrifying self-portrait. And now I am going to start with one of his poems, which appears in the 1942 volume "A Witness Tree." I am about to put forth my views and opinions about his lines without any concern for academic objectivity, and some of these views will be pretty dark. All I can say in my defense is (a) that I do like this poet enormously and I am going to try to sell him to you as he is, and (b) that some of that darkness is not entirely mine: it is his lines' sediment that has darkened my mind; in other words, I got it from him.

LET'S look at "Come In." A short poem in short metre—actually, a combination of trimeter with dimeter, anapest with iamb. The stuff of ballads, which by and large are all about gore and comeuppance. So, up to a certain point, is this poem. The metre hints as much. What are we dealing with here? A walk in the woods? A stroll through nature? Something that poets usually do? (And if yes, by the way, then why?) "Come In" is one of many poems written by Frost about such strolls. Think of "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," "Acquainted with the Night," "Desert Places," "Away!," and so forth. Or else think of Thomas Hardy's "The Darkling Thrush," with which this poem has a distinct affinity. Hardy was also very fond of lonely strolls, except most of his had a tendency to wind up in a graveyard—since England was settled long ago, and more thickly, I guess.

To begin with, we again have a thrush. And a bird, as you know, is very often a bard, since, technically speaking, both sing. So as we proceed we should bear in mind that our poet may be delegating certain aspects of his psyche to the bird. Actually, I firmly believe that these two birds are related. The difference is only that it takes Hardy sixteen lines to introduce his bird in a poem, whereas Frost gets down to business in the second line. On the whole, this is indicative of the difference between the Americans and the British—I mean in poetry. Because of a greater cultural heritage, a greater set of references, it usually takes much longer for a Briton to set a poem in motion. The sense of echo is stronger in his ear, and thus he flexes his muscle and demonstrates his facility before he gets down to his subject. Normally, that sort of routine results in a poem's being as big on exposition as on the actual message: in long-windedness, if you will—though, depending on who is doing the job, this is not necessarily a shortcoming.

Now, let's do it line by line. "As I came to the edge of the woods" is a fairly simple, informative job, stating the subject and setting the metre. An innocent line, on the surface, wouldn't you say? Well, it is, save for "the woods." "The woods" makes one suspicious, and, with that, "the edge" does, too. Poetry is a dame with a huge pedigree, and every word comes practically barnacled with allusions and associations. Since the fourteenth century, the woods have given off a very strong smell of *selva oscura*, and you may recall what that *selva* led the author of the Divine Comedy into. In any case, when a twentieth-century poet starts a poem with finding himself at the edge of the woods there is a reasonable element of danger—or, at least, a faint suggestion of it. The edge, in its very self, is sufficiently sharp.

Maybe not; maybe our suspicions are unfounded, maybe we are just paranoid and are reading too much into this line. Let's go to the next line, and we shall see:

> As I came to the edge of the woods,
> Thrush music—hark!

Looks like we've goofed. What could be more innocuous than this antiquated, Victorian-sounding, fairy-tale-like "hark"? A bird is singing—listen! "Hark" truly belongs in a Hardy poem, or in a ballad; better yet, in a jingle. It suggests a level of diction at which nothing untoward could be conveyed. The poem promises to proceed in a comforting, melodious way. That's what you're thinking, anyway, after hearing "hark": that you're going to have some sort of description of the music made by the thrush—that you are getting into familiar territory.

But that was a setup, as the following two lines show. It was but an exposition, crammed by Frost into two lines. Abruptly, in a fairly indecorous, matter-of-fact, non-melodious, and non-Victorian way, the diction and the register shift:

> Now if it was dusk outside,
> Inside it was dark.

It's "now" that does this job of leaving very little room for any fancy. What's more, you realize that the "hark" rhymes with "dark." And that that "dark" is the condition of "inside," which could allude not only to the woods, since the comma sets that "inside" into sharp opposition to the third line's "outside," and since the opposition is given you in the fourth line, which makes it a more drastic statement. Not to mention that this opposition is but the matter of substitution of just two letters: of putting "ar" instead of "us" between "d" and "k." The vowel sound remains essentially the same. What we've got here is the difference in just one consonant.

There is a slight choking air in the fourth line. That has to do with its distribution of stresses, different from the first dimeter. The stanza contracts, as it were, toward its end, and the caesura after "inside" only underscores that "inside" 's isolation. Now, while I am offering you this deliberately slanted reading of this poem, I'd like to urge you to pay very close attention to its every letter, every caesura, if only because it deals with a bird, and a bird's trills are a matter of pauses and, if you will, characters. Being predominantly monosyllabic, English is highly suitable for this parroting job, and the shorter the metre, the greater the pressure upon every letter, every caesura, every comma. At any rate, that "dark" literally renders the "woods" as *la selva oscura*.

With the memory of what that dark wood was entry to, let's approach the next stanza:

> Too dark in the woods for a bird
> By sleight of wing
> To better its perch for the night,
> Though it still could sing.

What do you think is happening here? A British or a Continental—or, for that matter, a properly American—innocent would still reply that it is about a bird singing in the evening, and that it is a nice tune. Interestingly, he would be right, and it is on this sort of rightness that Frost's reputation rests. In fact, though, this stanza, in particular, is extremely dark. One could argue that the poem considers something rather unpleasant, quite possibly a suicide. Or, if not suicide—well, death. And, if not necessarily death, then—at least, in this stanza—the notion of the afterlife.

In "Too dark in the woods for a bird," a bird, alias bard, scrutinizes "the woods" and finds them too dark. "Too" here echoes—no! harks back to—Dante's opening lines in the Divine Comedy: our bird/bard's assessment of that *selva* differs from the great Italian's. To put it plainly, the afterlife is darker for Frost than it is for Dante. The question is why, and the answer is either because he disbelieves in the whole thing or because his notion of himself makes him, in his mind, slated for damnation. Nothing in his power can improve his eventual standing, and I'd venture that "sleight of wing" could be regarded as a reference to last rites. Above all, this poem is about being old and pondering what is next. "To better its perch for the night" has to do with the possibility of being assigned elsewhere, not just to Hell—the night here being that of eternity. The only thing the bird/bard has to show for himself is that it/he "still could sing."

"The woods" are "too dark" for a bird because a bird is too far gone at being a bird. No motion of its soul, alias "sleight of wing," can improve its eventual fate in these "woods." Whose woods these are I think we know: one of their branches is where a bird is to end up anyway, and a "perch" gives a sense of these woods' being well structured: it is an enclosure—a sort of chicken coop, if you will. Thus, our bird is doomed; no last-minute conversion ("sleight" is a conjuring term) is feasible, if only because a bard is too old for any quick motion of the hand. Yet, old though he is, he still can sing.

And in the third stanza you have that bird singing: you have the song itself, the last one. It is a tremendously expansive gesture. Look at how every word here postpones the next one. "The last"—caesura—"of the light"—cae-

"Hey, handsome, got a leash? We could have some fun."

sura—“of the sun”—line break, which is a big caesura—“That had died”—caesura—“in the west.” Our bird/bard traces the last of the light to its vanished source. You almost hear in this line the good old “Shenandoah,” the song of going West. Delay and postponement are palpable here. “The last” is not finite, and “of the light” is not finite, and “of the sun” is not. What’s more, “that had died” itself is not finite, though it should have been. Even “in the west” isn’t. What we’ve got here is the song of lingering: of light, of life. You almost see the finger pointing out the source and then, in the broad circular motion of the last two lines, returning to the speaker in “Still lived”—caesura—“for one song more”—line break—“In a thrush’s breast.” Between “The last” and “breast” our poet covers an extraordinary distance: the width of the continent, if you will. After all, he describes the light, which is still upon him, the opposite of the darkness of the woods. The breast is, after all, the source of any song, and you almost see here not so much a thrush as a robin; anyhow, a bird singing at sunset: it lingers on the bird’s breast.

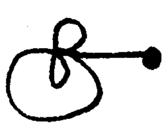
And here, in the opening lines of the fourth stanza, is where the bird and the bard part ways. “Far in the pillared dark/Thrush music went.” The key word here is “pillared,” of course: it suggests a cathedral interior—a church, in any case. In other words, our thrush flies into the woods, and you hear his music from within, “almost like a call to come in / To the dark and lament.” If you want, you may replace “lament” with “repent”: the effect will be practically the same. What’s being described here is one of the choices before our old bard this evening: the choice he does not make. The thrush has chosen that “sleight of wing” after all. It is bettering its perch for the night; it accepts its fate, for lament is acceptance. You could plunge yourself here into a maze of ecclesiastical distinctions—Frost’s essential Protestantism, etc. I’d advise against it, since a stoic posture befits believers and agnostics alike; in this line of work, it is practically inescapable. On the whole, references (religious ones especially) are not to be shrunk to inferences.

“But no, I was out for stars” is Frost’s usual deceptive maneuver, projecting his positive sensibility: lines like that are what earned him his reputation. If he was indeed “out for stars,” why didn’t he mention that before? Why did he write the whole poem about something else? But this line is here not solely to deceive you. It is here to deceive—or, rather, to quell—himself. This whole stanza is. Unless we read this line as the poet’s general statement about his presence in this world—in the romantic key, that is, as a line about his general metaphysical appetite, not to be quenched by this little one-night agony.

I would not come in.
I meant not even if asked,
And I hadn’t been.

There is too much jocular vehemence in these lines for us to take them at face value, although we should not omit this option, either. The man is shielding himself from his own insights, and he gets grammatically as well as syllabically assertive and less idiomatic—especially in the second line, “I would not come in,” which could be easily truncated into “I *won’t* come in.” “I meant not even if asked” comes off with a menacing resoluteness, which could amount to a statement of his agnosticism were it not for the last line’s all too clever qualifier: “And I hadn’t been.” This is indeed a sleight of hand.

Or else you can treat this stanza and, with it, the whole poem as Frost’s humble footnote or postscript to Dante’s Commedia, which ends with “stars”—as his acknowledgment of possessing either a lesser belief or a lesser gift. The poet here refuses an invitation into darkness; moreover, he questions the very call: “*Almost* like a call to come in . . .” One shouldn’t make heavy weather of Frost’s affinity with Dante, but here and there it’s palpable, especially in the poems dealing with dark nights of the soul—for instance, in “Acquainted with the Night.” Unlike a number of his illustrious contemporaries, Frost never wears his learning on his sleeve—mainly because it is in his bloodstream. So “I meant not even if asked” could be read not only as his refusal to make a meal of his dreadful apprehension but also as a reference to his stylistic choice in ruling out a major form. Be that as it may, one thing is clear: without Dante’s Commedia, this poem wouldn’t have existed.



Still, should you choose to read “Come In” as a nature poem, you are perfectly welcome to it. I suggest, though, that you take a longer look at the title. The twenty lines of the poem constitute, as it were, the title’s translation. And in this translation, I am afraid, the expression “come in” means “die.”

WHILE in “Come In” we have Frost at his lyrical best, in “Home Burial” we have him at his narrative best. Actually, “Home Burial” is not a narrative; it is an eclogue. Or, more exactly, it is a pastoral—except that it is a very dark one. Insofar as it tells a story, it is, of course, a narrative; the means of that story’s transportation, though, is dialogue, and it is the means of transportation that defines a genre. Invented by Theocritus in his idylls, refined by Virgil in the poems called Eclogues or Bucolics, the pastoral is essentially an exchange between two or more characters in a rural setting, returning often to that perennial subject, love. Since the English and French word “pastoral” is overburdened with happy connotations, and since Frost is closer to Virgil than to Theocritus, and not only chronologically, let’s follow Virgil and call this poem an eclogue. The rural setting is here, and so are the two characters: a farmer and his wife, who may qualify as a shepherd and a shepherdess, except that it is two thousand years later. So is their subject: love, two thousand years later.

To make a long story short, Frost is a very Virgilian poet. By that, I mean the Virgil of the Bucolics and the Georgics, not the Virgil of the Aeneid. To begin with, the young Frost did a considerable amount of farming—as well as a lot of writing. The posture of gentleman farmer wasn’t all posture. As a matter of fact, until the end of his days he kept buying farms. By the time he died, he had owned, if I am not mistaken, four farms in Vermont and New Hampshire. He knew something about living off the land—not less, in any case, than Virgil, who must have been a disastrous farmer, to judge by the agricultural advice he dispenses in the Georgics.

With few exceptions, American poetry is essentially Virgilian, which is to say contemplative. That is, if you take four Roman poets of the Augustan period, Propertius, Ovid, Virgil, and Horace, as the standard representatives of the four known humors (Propertius's choleric intensity, Ovid's sanguine couplings, Virgil's phlegmatic musings, Horace's melancholic equipoise), then American poetry—indeed, poetry in English in general—strikes you as being by and large of Virgilian or Horatian denomination. (Consider the bulk of Wallace Stevens' soliloquies, or the late, American Auden.) Yet Frost's affinity with Virgil is not so much temperamental as technical. Apart from frequent recourse to disguise (or mask) and the opportunity for distancing oneself that an invented character offers to the poet, Frost and Virgil have in common a tendency to hide the real subject matter of their dialogues under the monotonous, opaque sheen of their respective pentameters and hexameters. A poet of extraordinary probing and anxiety, the Virgil of the Eclogues and the Georgics is commonly taken for a bard of love and country pleasures, just like the author of "North of Boston."

To this it should be added that Virgil in Frost comes to you obscured by Wordsworth and Browning. "Filtered" is perhaps a better word, and Browning's dramatic monologue is quite a filter, engulfing the dramatic situation in solid Victorian ambivalence and uncertainty. Frost's dark pastorals are dramatic also, not only in the sense of the intensity of the characters' interplay but above all in the sense that they are indeed theatrical. It is a kind of theatre in which the author plays all the roles, including those of stage designer, director, ballet master, etc. It's he who turns the lights off, and sometimes he is the audience also.

That stands to reason. For Theocritus's idylls, in their own right, are but a compression of Greek drama. In "Home Burial" we have an arena reduced to a staircase, with its Hitchcockian banister. The opening line tells you as much about the actors' positions as about their roles: those of the hunter and his prey. Or, as you'll see later, of Pygmalion and Galatea, except that in this case the sculptor turns his living model into stone. In the final analysis, "Home Burial" is a love poem, and if only on these grounds it qualifies as a pastoral.

"Well, then, what about a copy of your annual report?"

• •

But let's examine this line and a half:

He saw her from the bottom of the stairs
Before she saw him.

Frost could have stopped right here. It is already a poem, it is already a drama. Imagine this line and a half sitting on the page all by itself, in minimalist fashion. It's an extremely loaded scene—or, better yet, a frame. You've got an enclosure, the house, with two individuals at cross—no, diverse—purposes. He's at the bottom of the stairs; she's at the top. He's looking up at her; she, for all we know thus far, doesn't register his presence at all. Also, you've got to remember that it's in black and white. The staircase dividing them suggests a hierarchy of significances. It is a pedestal with her atop (at least, in his eyes) and him at the bottom (in our eyes and, eventually, in hers). The angle is sharp. Place yourself here in either position—better in his—and you'll see what I mean. Imagine yourself observing, watching somebody, or imagine yourself being watched. Imagine yourself interpreting someone's movements—or immobility—unbeknownst to that person. That's what turns you into a hunter, or into Pygmalion.

Let me press this Pygmalion business a bit further. Scrutiny and interpretation are the gist of any intense human interplay, and of love in particular. They are also the most powerful source of literature: of fiction (which is by and large about betrayal) and, above all, of lyric

"I don't know how long we can keep telling people you're away from your desk."

poetry, where one is trying to figure out the beloved and what makes her/him tick. And this figuring out brings us back to the Pygmalion business quite literally, since the more you chisel out and the more you penetrate the character, the more you put your model on a pedestal. An enclosure—be it a house, a studio, a page—intensifies this pedestal aspect enormously. And, depending on your industry and on the model's ability to coöperate, this process results either in a masterpiece or in a disaster. In "Home Burial" it results in both. For every Galatea is ultimately a Pygmalion's self-projection. On the other hand, art doesn't imitate life but infects it.

So let's watch the deportment of the model:

> She was starting down,
> Looking back over her shoulder at some fear.
> She took a doubtful step and then undid it
> To raise herself and look again.

On the literal level, on the level of straight narrative, we have the heroine beginning to descend the steps with her head turned to us in profile, her glance lingering on some frightful sight. She hesitates and interrupts her descent, her eyes still trained, presumably, on the same sight: neither on the steps nor on the man at the bottom. But you are aware of yet another level present here, aren't you? Let's leave that level as yet unnamed. Each piece of information in this narrative comes to you in an isolated manner, within a pentameter line. The isolation job is done by white margins framing, as it were, the whole scene, like the silence of the house; and the lines themselves are the staircase. Basically, what you get here is a succession of frames. "She was starting down" is one frame. "Looking back over her shoulder at some fear" is another; in fact, it is a closeup, a profile—you see her facial expression. "She took a doubtful step and then undid it" is a third: again a close-up—the feet. "To raise herself and look again" is a fourth—full figure.

But this is a ballet, too. There is a minimum of two pas de deux here, conveyed to you with a wonderful euphonic, almost alliterative precision. I mean the "d"s in this line, in "doubtful" and in "undid it," although the "t"s matter also. "Undid it" is particularly good, because you sense the spring in that step. And that profile in its opposition to the movement of the body—the very formula of a dramatic heroine—is straight out of a ballet as well.

But the real faux pas de deux starts with "He spoke/Advancing toward her." For the next twenty-five lines, a conversation occurs on the stairs. The man climbs them as he speaks, negotiating mechanically and verbally what separates them. "Advancing" bespeaks self-consciousness and apprehensiveness. The tension grows with the growing proximity. However, the mechanical and, by implication, physical proximity is more easily attained than the verbal—i.e., the mental—and that's what the poem is all about. " 'What is it you see / From up there always?—for I want to know' " is very much a Pygmalion question, addressed to the model on the pedestal: atop the staircase. His fascination is not with what he sees but with what he imagines it conceals—what he has placed there. He invests her with mystery and then rushes to uncloak it: this rapacity is always Pygmalion's double bind. It is as though the sculptor found himself puzzled by the facial expression of his model: she "sees" what he does not "see." So he has to climb to the pedestal himself, to put himself in her position. In the position of "up there always"—of topographical (vis-à-vis the house) and psychological advantage, where he put her himself. It is the latter, the psychological advantage of the creation, that disturbs the creator, as the emphatic " 'for I want to know' " shows.

The model refuses to coöperate. In the next frame ("She turned and sank upon her skirts at that"), followed by the closeup of "And her face changed from terrified to dull," you get that lack of coöperation plain. Yet the lack of coöperation here *is* coöperation. For we have to bear in mind that the woman's psychological advantage is in the man's self-projection. He ascribes it to her. So by turning him down she only enhances his fantasy. In this sense, by refusing to coöperate she plays along. That's basically her whole game here. The more he climbs, the greater is that advantage; he pushes her into it, as it were, with every step.

Still, he is climbing: in "he said to gain time" he climbs, and also in

> "What is it you see?"
> Mounting until she cowered under him.
> "I will find out now—you must tell me, dear."

The most important word here is the verb “see,” which we encounter for the second time. In the next nine lines, it will be used four more times. We’ll get to that in a minute. But first let’s deal with this “mounting” line and the next. It’s a masterly job here. With “mounting,” the poet kills two birds at once, for “mounting” describes both the climb and the climber. And the climber looms even larger, because the woman “cowers”—i.e., shrinks under him. Remember that she looks “at some fear.” “Mounting” versus “cowered” gives you the contrast, then, between their respective frames, with the implicit danger contained in his largeness. In any case, her alternative to fear is not comfort. And the resoluteness of “ ‘I will find out now’ ” echoes the superior physical mass, not alleviated by the cajoling “dear” that follows a remark—“ ‘you must tell me’ ”—that is both imperative and conscious of this contrast.

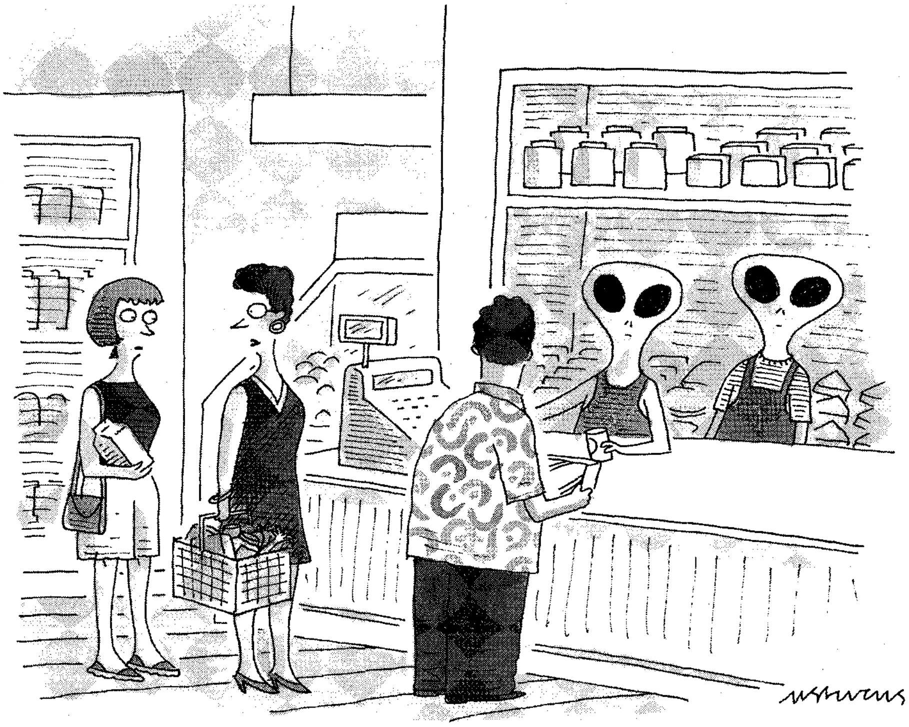
> She, in her place, refused him any help,
> With the least stiffening of her neck and silence.
> She let him look, sure that he wouldn’t see,
> Blind creature; and awhile he didn’t see.
> But at last he murmured, “Oh,” and again, “Oh.”
>
> “What is it—what?” she said.
> “Just that I see.”
>
> “You don’t,” she challenged. “Tell me what it is.”
>
> “The wonder is I didn’t see at once.”

And now we come to this verb “see.” Within fifteen lines it’s been used six times. Every experienced poet knows how risky it is to use the same word several times in a short space. The risk is that of tautology. So what is it that Frost is after here? I think he is after precisely that: tautology. More accurately, nonsemantic utterance. Which you get, for instance, in “ ‘Oh,’ and again, ‘Oh.’ ” Frost had a theory about what he called “sentence-sounds.” It had to do with his observation that the sound, the tonality, of human locution is as semantic as actual words. For instance, you overhear two people conversing behind a closed door, in a room. You don’t hear the words, yet you know the general drift of their dialogue; in fact, you may pretty accurately figure out its substance. In other words, the tune matters more than the lyrics, which are, so to speak, replaceable or redundant. Anyway, the repetition of this or that word liberates the tune, makes it more audible. By the same token, such repetition liberates the mind—rids you of the notion presented by the word. (This is the old Zen technique, of course, but, come to think of it, finding it in an American poem makes you wonder whether philosophical principles don’t spring from texts rather than the other way around.)

The six “see”s here do precisely that. They exclaim rather than explain. It could be “see,” it could be “Oh,” it could be “yes,” it could be any monosyllabic word. The idea is to explode the verb from within, for the content of the actual observation defeats the process of observation, its means, and the very observer. The effect that Frost tries to create is the inadequacy of response when you automatically repeat the first word that comes to your tongue. “Seeing” here is simply reeling from the unnameable. The least seeing our hero does is in “ ‘Just that I see,’ ” for by this time the verb, having already been used four times, is robbed of its “observing” and “understanding” meaning (not to mention the fact—draining the word even further of content—that we readers are ourselves still in the dark, don’t know what there is to see out that window). By now, it is just sound, denoting an animal response rather than a rational one.

This sort of explosion of bona-fide words into pure, nonsemantic sounds will occur several times in the course of this poem. Another happens very soon, ten lines later. Characteristically, these explosions occur whenever the players find themselves in close physical proximity. They are the verbal—or, better yet, the audial—equivalents of a hiatus. Frost directs them with tremendous consistency, suggesting his characters’ profound (at least, prior to this scene) incompatibility. “Home Burial” is, in fact, the study of that, and on the literal level the tragedy it describes is the characters’ comeuppance for violating each other’s territorial and mental imperatives by having a child. Now that the child is lost, the imperatives play themselves out with vehemence: they claim their own.

By standing next to the woman, the man acquires her vantage point. Because he is larger than she, and also because this is *his* house (as line 23 shows), where he has lived, presumably, most of his life, he must, one imagines, bend somewhat to put his eyes on her line of vision. Now they are next to each other, in an almost intimate proximity, on the threshold of their bedroom, atop



“Am I going crazy or was this place Korean just last week?”

the stairs. The bedroom has a window; a window has a view. And here Frost produces the most stunning simile of this poem, and perhaps of his entire career:

> "The wonder is I didn't see at once.
> I never noticed it from here before.
> I must be wonted to it—that's the
>   reason.
> The little graveyard where my people
>   are!
> So small the window frames the
>   whole of it.
> Not so much larger than a bedroom,
>   is it?
> There are three stones of slate and
>   one of marble,
> Broad-shouldered little slabs there in
>   the sunlight
> On the sidehill. We haven't to mind
>   *those*.
> But I understand: it is not the stones,
> But the child's mound—"

" 'The little graveyard where my people are!' " generates an air of endearment, and it's with this air that " 'So small the window frames the whole of it' " starts, only to tumble itself into " 'Not so much larger than a bedroom, is it?' " The key word here is "frames," because it doubles as the window's actual frame and as a picture on a bedroom wall. The window hangs, as it were, on the bedroom wall like a picture, and that picture depicts a graveyard. "Depicting," though, means reducing to the size of a picture. Imagine having that in your bedroom. In the next line, though, the graveyard is restored to its actual size and, for that reason, equated with the bedroom. This equation is as much psychological as it is spatial. Inadvertently, the man blurts out the summary of the marriage (foreshadowed in the grim pun of the title). And, equally inadvertently, the "is it?" invites the woman to agree with this summary, almost implying her complicity.

As if that were not enough, the next two lines, with their stones of slate and marble, proceed to reinforce the simile, equating the graveyard with the made-up bed, with its pentametrically arranged pillows and cushions—populated by a family of small, inanimate children: "Broad-shouldered little slabs." This is Pygmalion unbound, on a rampage. What we have here is the man's intrusion into the woman's mind, a violation of her mental imperative—if you will, an ossification of it. And then this ossifying hand—petrifying, actually—stretches toward what's still raw, palpably as well as in her mind:

> "But I understand: it is not the stones,
> But the child's mound—"

It's not that the contrast between the stones and the mound is too stark, though it is; it is his ability—or, rather, his attempt—to articulate it that she finds unbearable. For, should he succeed, should he find the words to articulate her mental anguish, the mound will join the stones in the "picture," will become a slab itself, will become a pillow of their bed. Moreover, this will amount to the total penetration of her inner sanctum: that of her mind. And he is getting there:

>   "Don't, don't, don't,
> don't," she cried.
>
> She withdrew, shrinking from
>   beneath his arm
> That rested on the banister, and slid
>   downstairs;
> And turned on him with such a
>   daunting look,
> He said twice over before he knew
>   himself:
> "Can't a man speak of his own child
>   he's lost?"

The poem is gathering its dark force. Four "Don't"s are that nonsemantic explosion, resulting in hiatus. We are so much in the story line now—up to the eyebrows—that we may forget that this is still a ballet, still a succession of frames, still an artifice, stage-managed by the poet. In fact, we are about to take sides with our characters, aren't we? Well, I suggest we pull ourselves out of this by our eyebrows and think for a moment about what it all tells us about our poet. Imagine, for instance, that the story line has been drawn from experience—from, say, the loss of a firstborn. What does all that you've read thus far tell you about the author, about his sensibility? How much he is absorbed by the story and—what's more crucial—to what degree he is free from it?

Were this a seminar, I'd wait for your answers. Since it is not, I've got to answer this question myself. And the answer is: He is very free. Dangerously so. The very ability to utilize—to play with—this sort of material suggests an extremely wide margin of detachment. The ability to turn this material into a blank-verse, pentameter monotone adds another degree to that detachment. To observe a relation between a family graveyard and a bedroom's four-poster—still another. Added up, they amount to a considerable degree of detachment. A degree that dooms human interplay, that makes communication impossible, for communication requires an equal. This is very much the predicament of Pygmalion vis-à-vis his model. So it's not that the story the poem tells is autobiographical but that the poem is the author's self-portrait. That is why one abhors literary biography—because it is reductive. That is why I am resisting issuing you with actual data on Frost.

Where does he go, you may ask, with all that detachment? The answer is: utter autonomy. It is from there that he observes similarities among unlike things, it is from there that he imitates the vernacular. Would you like to meet Mr. Frost? Then read his poems, nothing else; otherwise, you are in for criticism from below. Would you like to be him? Would you like to become Robert Frost? Perhaps one should be advised against such aspirations. For a sensibility like this, there is very little hope of real human conjugality; and, actually, there is very little romantic dirt on him—of the sort normally indicative of such hope.

This is not necessarily a digression, but let's get back to the lines. Remember the hiatus, and what causes it, and remember that this is an artifice. Actually, the author himself reminds you of it with

> She withdrew, shrinking from
>   beneath his arm
> That rested on the banister, and slid
>   downstairs.

It is still a ballet, you see, and the stage direction is incorporated into the text. The most telling detail here is the banister. Why does the author put it here? First, to reintroduce the staircase, which we might by now have forgotten about, stunned by the business of ruining the bedroom. But, secondly, the banister prefigures her sliding downstairs, since every child uses banisters for sliding down. "And turned on him with such a daunting look" is another stage direction.

> He said twice over before he knew
>   himself:
> "Can't a man speak of his own child
>   he's lost?"

Now, this is a remarkably good line. It

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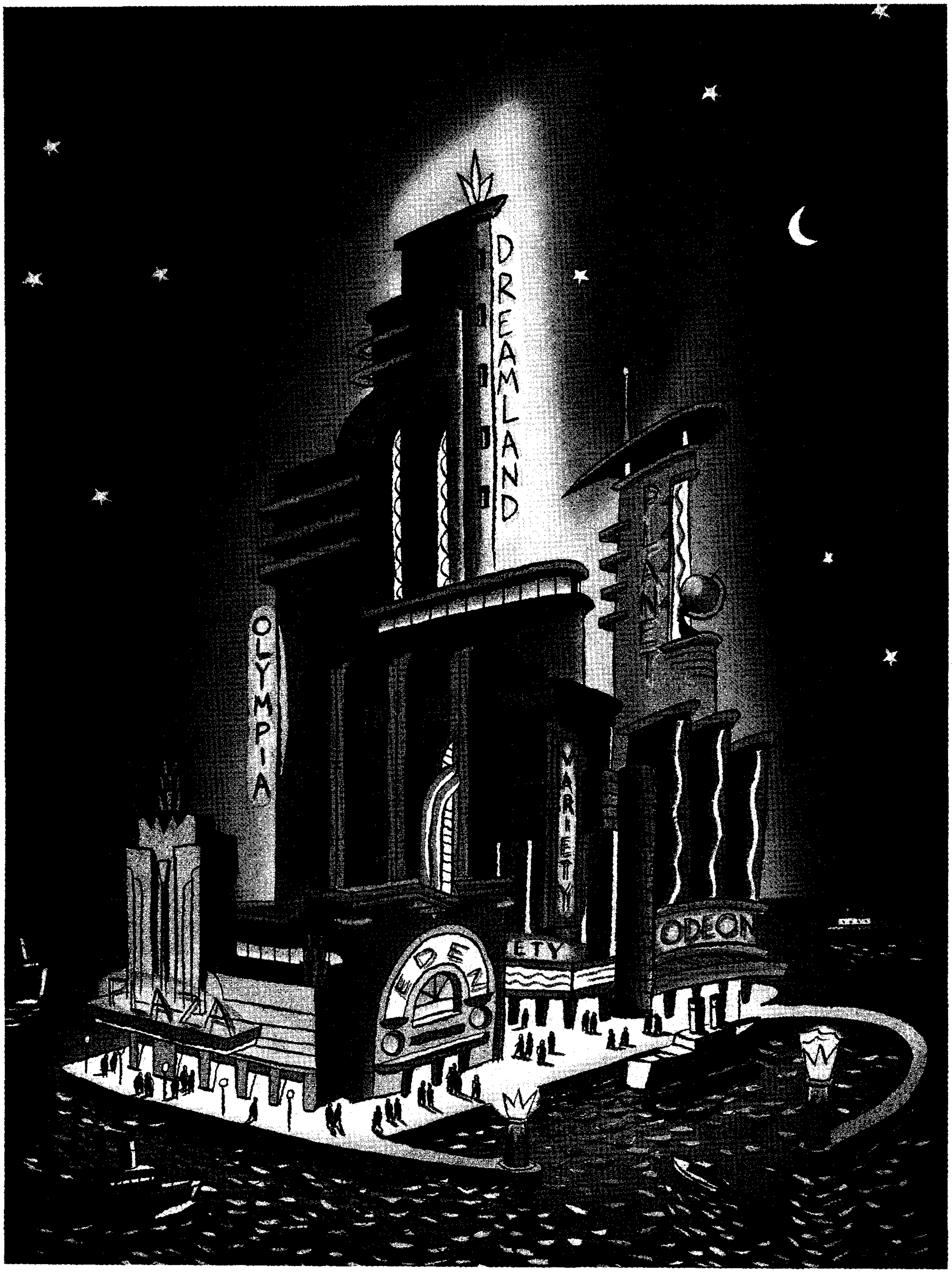
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SCREENING MANHATTAN: *The thirty-second annual New York Film Festival opens at Lincoln Center on September 23rd.*

has a distinctly vernacular, almost proverbial air. And the author is definitely aware of how good it is. So, both trying to underscore its effectiveness and to obscure his awareness of it, he emphasizes the unwittingness of this utterance: "He said twice over before he knew himself." On the literal, narrative level, we have the man stunned by the woman's gaze, the daunting look, and groping for words. Frost was awfully good with those formulaic, quasi-proverbial one-liners. "For to be social is to be forgiving" (in "The Star-Splitter"), or "The best way out is always through" ("A Servant to Servants"), for example. And a few lines later you are going to get yet another one. They are mostly pentametric; iambic pentameter is very congenial to that sort of job.

This whole section of the poem, from " 'Don't, don't, don't, don't' " on, obviously has some sexual connotations, of her turning the man down. That's what the story of Pygmalion and his model is all about. On the literal level, "Home Burial" evolves along similar "hard to get" lines. However, I don't think that Frost, for all his autonomy, was conscious of that. (After all, "North of Boston" shows no acquaintance with Freudian terminology.) And, if he was not, this sort of approach on our part is invalid. Nevertheless, we should bear some of it in mind as we are embarking on the bulk of this poem:

"Not you!—Oh, where's my hat? Oh, I don't need it!
I must get out of here. I must get air.—
I don't know rightly whether any man can."

"Amy! Don't go to someone else this time.
Listen to me. I won't come down the stairs."
He sat and fixed his chin between his fists.
"There's something I should like to ask you, dear."

"You don't know how to ask it."

"Help me, then."

Her fingers moved the latch for all reply.

WHAT we've got here is the desire to escape: not so much the man as the enclosure of the place, not to mention the subject of their exchange. Yet the resolution is incomplete, as the fidgeting with the hat shows, since the execution of this desire will be counterproductive for the model as far as being the subject of explication goes. May I go so far as to suggest that that would mean a loss of advantage, not to mention that it would be the end of the poem? In fact, it does end with precisely that, with her exit. The literal level will get into conflict, or fusion, with the metaphorical. Hence " 'I don't know rightly whether any man can,' " which fuses both these levels, forcing the poem to proceed; you don't know any longer who is the horse here, who is the cart. I doubt whether the poet himself knew that at this point. The fusion's result is the release of a certain force, which subordinates his pen, and the best it can do is keep both strands—literal and metaphorical—in check.

We learn the heroine's name, and that this sort of discourse had its precedents, with nearly identical results. Given the fact that we know the way the poem ends, we may judge—well, we may imagine—the character of those occasions. The scene in "Home Burial" is but a repetition. By this token, the poem doesn't so much inform us about their life as replace it. We also learn, from " 'Don't go to someone else this time,' " about a mixture of jealousy and sense of shame felt by at least one of them. And we learn, from " 'I won't come down the stairs' " and from "He sat and fixed his chin between his fists," about the fear of violence present in their physical proximity. The latter line is a wonderful embodiment of stasis, very much in the fashion of Rodin's "Penseur," albeit with two fists, which is a very telling self-referential detail, since the forceful application of fist to chin is what results in a knockout.

The main thing here, though, is the reintroduction of the stairs. Not only the literal stairs but the steps in "he sat," too. From now on, the entire dialogue occurs on the stairs, though they have become the scene of an impasse rather than a passage. No physical steps are taken. Instead, we have their verbal, or oral, substitute. The ballet ends, yielding to the verbal advance and retreat, which is heralded by " 'There's something I should like to ask you, dear.' " Note again the air of cajoling, colored this time with the recognition of its futility in "dear." Note also the last semblance of actual interplay in " 'You don't know how to ask it.' 'Help me, then' "—this last knocking on the door, or, better yet, on the wall. Note "Her fingers moved the latch for all reply," because this feint of trying for the door is the last physical movement, the last theatrical or cinematic gesture in the poem, save one more latch-trying.

"My words are nearly always an offense.
I don't know how to speak of anything
So as to please you. But I might be taught,
I should suppose. I can't say I see how.
A man must partly give up being a man
With womenfolk. We could have some arrangement
By which I'd bind myself to keep hands off
Anything special you're a-mind to name.
Though I don't like such things 'twixt those that love.
Two that don't love can't live together without them.
But two that do can't live together with them."
She moved the latch a little.

The speaker's hectic mental pacing is fully counterbalanced by his immobility. If this is a ballet, it is a mental one. In fact, it's very much like fencing: not with an opponent or a shadow but with one's self. The lines are constantly taking a step forward and then undoing it. ("She took a doubtful step and then undid it.") The main technical device here is enjambment, which physically resembles descending the stairs. In fact, this back-and-forth, this give-and-take almost gives you a sense of being short of breath. Until, that is, the release that is coming with the formulaic, folksy " 'A man must partly give up being a man / With womenfolk.' "

After this release, you get three lines of more evenly paced verse, almost a tribute to iambic pentameter's proclivity for coherence, ending with the pentametrically triumphant " 'Though I don't like such things 'twixt those that love.' " And here our poet makes another not so subdued dash toward the proverbial: " 'Two that don't love can't live together without them. / But two that do can't live together with them' "—though this comes off as a bit cumbersome, and not entirely convincing.

Frost partly senses that: hence "She moved the latch a little." But that's only

HOME BURIAL

He saw her from the bottom of the stairs
Before she saw him. She was starting down,
Looking back over her shoulder at some fear.
She took a doubtful step and then undid it
To raise herself and look again. He spoke
Advancing toward her: "What is it you see
From up there always?—for I want to know."
She turned and sank upon her skirts at that,
And her face changed from terrified to dull.
He said to gain time: "What is it you see?"
Mounting until she cowered under him.
"I will find out now—you must tell me, dear."
She, in her place, refused him any help,
With the least stiffening of her neck and silence.
She let him look, sure that he wouldn't see,
Blind creature; and awhile he didn't see.
But at last he murmured, "Oh," and again, "Oh."

"What is it—what?" she said.

"Just that I see."

"You don't," she challenged. "Tell me what it is."

"The wonder is I didn't see at once.
I never noticed it from here before.
I must be wonted to it—that's the reason.
The little graveyard where my people are!
So small the window frames the whole of it.
Not so much larger than a bedroom, is it?
There are three stones of slate and one of marble,
Broad-shouldered little slabs there in the sunlight
On the sidehill. We haven't to mind *those*.
But I understand: it is not the stones,
But the child's mound—"

"Don't, don't, don't,
don't," she cried.

She withdrew, shrinking from beneath his arm
That rested on the banister, and slid downstairs;
And turned on him with such a daunting look,
He said twice over before he knew himself:
"Can't a man speak of his own child he's lost?"

"Not you!—Oh, where's my hat? Oh, I don't need it!
I must get out of here. I must get air.—
I don't know rightly whether any man can."

"Amy! Don't go to someone else this time.
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He sat and fixed his chin between his fists.
"There's something I should like to ask you, dear."

"You don't know how to ask it."

"Help me, then."

Her fingers moved the latch for all reply.

"My words are nearly always an offense.
I don't know how to speak of anything
So as to please you. But I might be taught,
I should suppose. I can't say I see how.
A man must partly give up being a man
With womenfolk. We could have some arrangement
By which I'd bind myself to keep hands off
Anything special you're a-mind to name.
Though I don't like such things 'twixt those that love.

→

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one explanation. The whole point of this qualifier-burdened monologue is the explication of its addressee. The man is groping for understanding. He realizes that in order to understand he's got to surrender—if not suspend entirely—his rationality. In other words, he descends. But this is really running down stairs that lead upward. And, partly from rapidly approaching the end of his wits, partly out of purely rhetorical inertia, he summons here the notion of love. In other words, this quasi-proverbial two-liner about love is a rational argument, and that, of course, is not enough for its addressee.

For the more she is explicated, the more remote she gets: the higher her pedestal grows (which is perhaps of specific importance to her now that she is downstairs). It's not grief that drives her out of the house but the dread of being explicated, as well as of the explicator himself. She wants to stay impenetrable and won't accept anything short of his complete surrender. And he is well on the way to it:

"Don't—don't go.
Don't carry it to someone else this time.
Tell me about it if it's something human."

The last is the most stunning, most tragic line, in my view, in the entire poem. It amounts practically to the heroine's ultimate victory—i.e., to the aforementioned rational surrender on the part of the explicator. For all its colloquial air, it promotes her mental operations to supernatural status, thus acknowledging infinity—ushered into her mind by the child's death—as his rival. Against this he is powerless, since her access to that infinity, her absorption by and commerce with it, is backed in his eyes by the whole mythology of the opposite sex—by the whole notion of the alternative being impressed upon him by her at this point rather thoroughly. That's what he is losing her to by staying rational. It is a shrill, almost hysterical line, admitting the man's limitations and momentarily bringing the whole discourse to a plane of regard that the heroine could be at home on—the one she perhaps seeks. But only momentarily. He can't proceed at this level, and succumbs to pleading:

"Let me into your grief. I'm not so much
Unlike other folks as your standing there
Apart would make me out. Give me my chance.

Two that don't love can't live together without them.
But two that do can't live together with them."
She moved the latch a little. "Don't—don't go.
Don't carry it to someone else this time.
Tell me about it if it's something human.
Let me into your grief. I'm not so much
Unlike other folks as your standing there
Apart would make me out. Give me my chance.
I do think, though, you overdo it a little.
What was it brought you up to think it the thing
To take your mother-loss of a first child
So inconsolably—in the face of love.
You'd think his memory might be satisfied—"

"There you go sneering now!"

"I'm not, I'm not!
You make me angry. I'll come down to you.
God, what a woman! And it's come to this,
A man can't speak of his own child that's dead."

"You can't because you don't know how to speak.
If you had any feelings, you that dug
With your own hand—how could you?—his little grave;
I saw you from that very window there,
Making the gravel leap and leap in air,
Leap up, like that, like that, and land so lightly
And roll back down the mound beside the hole.
I thought, Who is that man? I didn't know you.
And I crept down the stairs and up the stairs
To look again, and still your spade kept lifting.
Then you came in. I heard your rumbling voice
Out in the kitchen, and I don't know why,
But I went near to see with my own eyes.
You could sit there with the stains on your shoes
Of the fresh earth from your own baby's grave
And talk about your everyday concerns.
You had stood the spade up against the wall
Outside there in the entry, for I saw it."

"I shall laugh the worst laugh I ever laughed.
I'm cursed. God, if I don't believe I'm cursed."

"I can repeat the very words you were saying:
'Three foggy mornings and one rainy day
Will rot the best birch fence a man can build.'
Think of it, talk like that at such a time!
What had how long it takes a birch to rot
To do with what was in the darkened parlor?
You *couldn't* care! The nearest friends can go
With anyone to death, comes so far short
They might as well not try to go at all
No, *from the time when one is sick to death,*
One is alone, and he dies more alone.
Friends make pretense of following to the grave,
But before one is in it, their minds are turned
And making the best of their way back to life
And living people, and things they understand.
But the world's evil. I won't have grief so
If I can change it. Oh, I won't. I won't!"

"There, you have said it all and you feel better.
You won't go now. You're crying. Close the door.
The heart's gone out of it: why keep it up?
Amy! There's someone coming down the road!"

"*You*—oh, you think the talk is all. I must go—
Somewhere out of this house. How can I make you—"

"If—you—do!" She was opening the door wider.
"Where do you mean to go? First tell me that.
I'll follow and bring you back by force. I *will!*—"

—Robert Frost

I do think, though, you overdo it a little.
What was it brought you up to think it the thing
To take your mother-loss of a first child
So inconsolably—in the face of love.
You'd think his memory might be satisfied—"

He tumbles down, as it were, from the hysterical height of " 'Tell me about it if it's something human.' " But this tumble, this mental knocking about the metrically lapsing stairs, restores him to rationality, with all its attendant qualifiers. That brings him rather close to the heart of the matter—to her taking her " 'mother-loss of a first child / So inconsolably' "—and he evokes the catchall notion of love again, this time somewhat more convincingly, though still tinged with a rhetorical flourish: " 'in the face of love.' " The very word—"love"—undermines its emotional reality, reducing the sentiment to its utilitarian application: as a means of overcoming tragedy. However, overcoming tragedy deprives its victim of the status of hero or heroine. This, combined with the resentment over the explicator's lowering of his explication's plane of regard, results in the heroine's interruption of " 'You'd think his memory might be satisfied—' " with " 'There you go sneering now!' " It's Galatea's self-defense, the defense against the further application of the chiselling instrument to her already attained features.

Because of its absorbing story line, there is a strong temptation to bill "Home Burial" as a tragedy of incommunicability, a poem about the failure of language; and many have succumbed to this temptation. In fact, it is just the reverse: it is a tragedy of communication, for communication's logical end is the violation of your interlocutor's mental imperative. This is a poem about language's terrifying success, for language, in the final analysis, is alien to the sentiments it articulates. No one is more aware of that than a poet; and, if "Home Burial" is autobiographical, it is so in the first place by revealing Frost's grasp of the collision between his métier and his emotions. To drive this point home, may I suggest that you compare the actual sentiment you may feel toward an individual in your company and the word "love." A poet is doomed to resort to words. So is the speaker in "Home Burial." Hence, their overlapping in this poem; hence, too, its autobiographical reputation.

But let us take it a step further. The poet here should be identified not with one character but with both. He is the man here, all right, but he is the woman also. Thus you've got a clash not just of two sensibilities but of two languages. Sensibilities may merge—say, in the act of love; languages can't. Sensibilities may result in a child; languages won't. And, now that the child is dead, what's left is two totally autonomous languages, two non-overlapping systems of verbalization. In short: words. His versus hers, and hers are fewer. This makes her enigmatic. Enigmas are subject to explication, which they resist—in her case, with all she's got. His job, or, more exactly, the job of his language, is, therefore, the explication of her language, or, more exactly, her reticence. Which, when it comes to human interplay, is a recipe for disaster. When it comes to a poem, an enormous challenge.

Small wonder, then, that this "dark pastoral" grows darker with every line; it proceeds by aggravation, reflecting not so much the complexity of the author's mind as words' own appetite for disaster. For the more you push reticence, the greater it gets, having nothing to fall back upon but itself. The enigma thus grows bigger. It's like Napoleon invading Russia and finding that it goes beyond the Urals. Small wonder that this "dark pastoral" of ours has no choice but to proceed by aggravation, for the poet's mind plays both the invading army and the territory; in the end, he can't take sides. It is a sense of the incomprehensible vastness of what lies ahead, defeating not only the notion of conquest but the very sense of progress, that informs both " 'Tell me about it if it's something human' " and the lines that follow " 'There you go sneering now!' ":

> "I'm not, I'm not!
> You make me angry. I'll come down to you.
> God, what a woman!"

A language invading reticence gets no trophy here, save the echo of its own words. All it has to show for its efforts is a good old line that brought it nowhere before:

> "And it's come to this,
> A man can't speak of his own child that's dead."

It, too, falls back on itself. A stalemate.

IT'S broken by the woman. More exactly, her reticence is broken. Which could be regarded by the male character as success, were it not for what she surrenders. Which is not so much an offensive as a negation of all the man stands for.

> "You can't because you don't know how to speak.
> If you had any feelings, you that dug
> With your own hand—how could you?—his little grave;
> I saw you from that very window there,
> Making the gravel leap and leap in air,
> Leap up, like that, like that, and land so lightly
> And roll back down the mound beside the hole.
> I thought, Who is that man? I didn't know you.
> And I crept down the stairs and up the stairs
> To look again, and still your spade kept lifting.
> Then you came in. I heard your rumbling voice
> Out in the kitchen, and I don't know why,
> But I went near to see with my own eyes.
> You could sit there with the stains on your shoes
> Of the fresh earth from your own baby's grave
> And talk about your everyday concerns.
> You had stood the spade up against the wall
> Outside there in the entry, for I saw it."
>
> "I shall laugh the worst laugh I ever laughed.
> I'm cursed. God, if I don't believe I'm cursed."

This is the voice of a very foreign territory indeed: a foreign language. It is a view of the man from a distance he can't possibly fathom, since it is proportionate to the frequency with which the heroine creeps up and down the stairs. Which, in its own right, is proportionate to the leaps of his gravel in the course of his digging the grave. Whatever the ratio, it is not in favor of his actual or mental steps toward her on that staircase. Nor in his favor is the rationale behind her creeping up and down the stairs while he is digging. Presumably, there is nobody else around to do the job. (That they lost their firstborn suggests that they are fairly young and thus not very well off.) Presumably also, by performing this menial task, and by doing it in a particularly mechanical way—as a remarkably skillful mimetic job in the pentameter here indicates (or as is charged by the heroine)—the man is quelling, or controlling, his grief; that is, his movements, unlike the heroine's, are functional.

In short, this is futility's view of utility. For obvious reasons, this view is usually precise and rich in judgment: " 'If you had any feelings,' " and " 'Leap up, like that, like that, and land so lightly / And roll back down the mound beside the hole.' " Depending on the length of observation—and the description of digging runs here for nine lines—this view may result, as it does here, in a sensation of utter disparity between the observer and the observed: " 'I thought, Who is that man? I didn't know you.' " For observation, you see, results in nothing, while digging produces at least a mound, or a hole. Whose mental equivalent in the observer is also, as it were, a grave. Or, rather, a fusion of the man and his purpose, not to mention his instrument. What futility and Frost's pentameter register here above all is rhythm. The heroine observes an inanimate machine. The man in her eye is a gravedigger, and thus her alternative.

Now, the sight of our alternative is always unwelcome, not to say threatening. The closer your view of it, the sharper your general sense of guilt and of a deserved comeuppance. In the mind of a woman who has lost her child, that sense may be fairly sharp. Add to that her inability to translate her grief into any useful action, save a highly agitated creeping up and down, as well as the recognition—and subsequent glorification—of that inability. And add a cross-purpose correspondence between her movements and his: between her steps and his spade. What do you think it would result in? And remember that she is in *his* house, that this is the graveyard where *his* people are. And that he is a gravedigger.

> "Then you came in. I heard your rumbling voice
> Out in the kitchen, and I don't know why,
> But I went near to see with my own eyes."

Note this "and I don't know why," for here she unwittingly drifts toward her own projection. All that she needs now is to check that projection with her own eyes. That is, she wants to make her mental picture physical:

> "You could sit there with the stains
> on your shoes
> Of the fresh earth from your own
> baby's grave
> And talk about your everyday
> concerns.
> You had stood the spade up against
> the wall
> Outside there in the entry, for I saw
> it."

So what do you think she sees with her own eyes, and what does that sight prove? What does the frame contain this time? What does she have a closeup of? I am afraid she sees a murder weapon: she sees a blade. The fresh earth stains either on the shoes or on his spade make the spade's edge shine: make it into a blade. And does earth "stain," however fresh? Her very choice of noun, denoting liquid, suggests—accuses—blood. What should our man have done? Should he have taken his shoes off before entering the house? Perhaps. Perhaps he should have left his spade outside, too. But he is a farmer, and acts like one—presumably out of fatigue. So he brings in his instrument—in her eyes, the instrument of death. And the same goes for his shoes, and it goes for the rest of the man. A gravedigger is equated here, if you will, with the reaper. And there are only the two of them in this house.

The most awful bit is "for I saw it," because it emphasizes the perceived symbolism of that spade left standing against the wall outside there in the entry: for future use. Or as a guard. Or as an unwitting memento mori. At the same time, "for I saw it" conveys the capriciousness of her perception and the triumph of somebody who cannot be fooled, the triumph of catching the enemy. It is futility in full bloom, engulfing and absorbing utility into its shadow.

> "I shall laugh the worst laugh I ever
> laughed.
> I'm cursed. God, if I don't believe
> I'm cursed."

This is practically a nonverbal recognition of defeat, coming in the form of a typical Frostian understatement, studded with tautological monosyllables quickly abandoning their semantic functions. Our Napoleon or Pygmalion is completely routed by his creation, who still keeps pressing on.

> "I can repeat the very words you
> were saying:
> 'Three foggy mornings and one rainy
> day
> Will rot the best birch fence a man
> can build.'
> Think of it, talk like that at such a
> time!
> What had how long it takes a birch
> to rot
> To do with what was in the
> darkened parlor?"

Now, this is where our poem effectively ends. The rest is simply dénouement, in which our heroine goes rambling on in an increasingly incoherent fashion about death, the world being evil, uncaring friends, and feeling alone. It is a rather hysterical monologue, whose only function, in terms of the story line, is to struggle toward a release for what has been pent up in her mind. It does not, and in the end she resorts to the door, as though only landscape were proportionate to her mental state and thus could be of solace.

And, quite possibly, it is. A conflict within an enclosure—a house, say—normally deteriorates into tragedy, because the rectangularity of the place itself puts a higher premium on reason, offering emotion only a straitjacket. Thus in the house the man is the master not only because the house is his but because—within the context of the poem—rationality is his. In a landscape, "Home Burial" 's dialogue would have run a different course; in a landscape, the man would be the loser. The drama would perhaps be even greater, for it's one thing when the house sides with a character, and another when the elements do so. In any case, that's why she is trying for the door.

So let's get back to the five lines that precede the dénouement—to this business of rotting birches. "Three foggy mornings and one rainy day / Will rot the best birch fence a man can build," our farmer is quoted as saying, sitting there in the kitchen, clods of fresh earth on his shoes and the spade standing up there in the entry. One may ascribe this phrase again to his fatigue and to the next task in store for him: building a little fence around the new grave. However, since this is not a public but a family graveyard, the fence he mentioned might indeed be one of his everyday concerns, something else he has to deal with. And presumably he mentions it to take his mind off what he has just finished doing. Still, for all his effort, the mind is not entirely taken, as the verb "rot" indicates: the line contains the shadow of the hidden comparison—if a fence rots so quickly in the damp *air*, how quickly will a little coffin rot in earth damp enough to leave "stains" on his shoes? But the heroine once again resists the encompassing gambits of language—metaphor, irony, litotes—and goes straight for the literal meaning, the absolute. And that's what she jumps on in " 'What had how long it takes a birch to rot / To do with what was in the darkened parlor?' " What is remarkable here is how diverse their treatment of the notion of rotting is. While he is talking about a "birch fence," which is a clear deflection, not to mention a reference to something above the ground, she zeroes in on "what was in the darkened parlor." It's understandable that, being a mother, she concentrates—that Frost makes her concentrate—on the dead child. Yet her way of referring to it is highly roundabout, even euphemistic: "what was in." Not to mention that she refers to her dead child as a "what," not a "who." We don't learn his name, and, for all we know, he didn't have much of a life after his birth. And then you should note her reference to the grave: "the darkened parlor."

Now, with "darkened parlor," the poet finishes his portrait of the heroine. We have to bear in mind that this is a rural setting, that the heroine lives in "his" house—i.e., that she came here from without. And the "darkened parlor" is an answer to the question "From where?" since, in the context of the poem, it strikes one as very much an urbane locution. I'd say it is distinctly Victorian, though we can't be sure, as "Home Burial" was written some time before 1914.

I think you will agree that this is not a European poem. Not French, not Italian, not German, not even English. I also can assure you that it is not Russian at all. And, in terms of what American poetry is like today, it is not American, either. It's Frost's own, and he has been dead for over a quarter of a century now. Small wonder then that one rambles on about his lines at such length, and in strange places, though he no doubt

Gahan Wilson

"You've been fooling around with alternative medicines, haven't you?"

• •

would wince at being introduced to a French audience by a Russian. On the other hand, he was no stranger to incongruity.

So what was it that he was after in this, his very own poem? He was, I think, after grief and reason, which, while poison to each other, are language's most efficient fuel—or, if you will, poetry's indelible ink. Frost's reliance on them here and elsewhere almost gives you the sense that his dipping into this inkpot had to do with the hope of reducing the level of its contents; you detect a sort of vested interest on his part. Yet the more one dips into it, the more it brims with this black essence of existence, and the more one's mind, like one's fingers, gets soiled by this liquid. For the more there is of grief, the more there is of reason. As much as one may be tempted to take sides in "Home Burial," the presence of the narrator here rules this out, for, while the characters stand, respectively, for reason and for grief, the narrator stands for their fusion. To put it differently, while the characters' actual union disintegrates, the story, as it were, marries grief to reason, since the bond of the narrative here supersedes the individual dynamics—well, at least for the reader. Perhaps for the author as well. The poem, in other words, plays fate.

I suppose it is this sort of marriage that Frost was after, or perhaps the other way around. Many years ago, on a flight from New York to Detroit, I chanced upon an essay by the poet's daughter printed in the American Airlines inflight magazine. In that essay Lesley Frost says that her father and her mother were co-valedictorians at the high school they both attended. While she doesn't recall the topic of her father's speech on that occasion, she remembers what she was told was her mother's. It was called something like "Conversation as a Force in Life" (or "the Living Force"). If, as I hope, someday you find a copy of "North of Boston" and read it, you'll realize that Elinor White's topic is, in a nutshell, the main structural device of that collection, for most of the poems in "North of Boston" are dialogues—are conversations. In this sense, we are dealing here—in "Home Burial," as elsewhere in "North of Boston"—with love poetry, or, if you will, with poetry of obsession: not that of a man with a woman so much as that of an argument with a counterargument—of a voice with a voice. That goes for monologues as well, actually, since a monologue is one's argument with oneself; take, for instance, "To be or not to be . . ." That's why poets so often resort to writing plays. In the end, of course, it was not the dialogue that Robert Frost was after but the other way around, if only because by themselves two voices amount to little. Fused, they set in motion something that, for want of a better term, we may just as well call "life." This is why "Home Burial" ends with a dash, not with a period.

If this poem is dark, darker still is the mind of its maker, who plays all three roles: the man, the woman, and the narrator. Their equal reality, taken separately or together, is still inferior to that of the poem's author, since "Home Burial" is but one poem among many. The price of his autonomy is, of course, in its coloration, and perhaps what you ultimately get out of this poem is not its story but the vision of its ultimately autonomous maker. The characters and the narrator are, as it were, pushing the author out of any humanly palatable context: he stands outside, denied reëntry, perhaps not coveting it at all. This is the dialogue's—alias the Life Force's—doing. And this particular posture, this utter autonomy, strikes me as utterly American. Hence this poet's monotone, his pentametric drawl: a signal from a far-distant station. One may liken him to a spacecraft that, as the downward pull of gravity weakens, finds itself nonetheless in the grip of a different gravitational force: outward. The fuel, though, is still the same: grief and reason. The only thing that conspires against this metaphor of mine is that American spacecrafts usually return. ♦

A REPORTER AT LARGE

MISSILE WARS

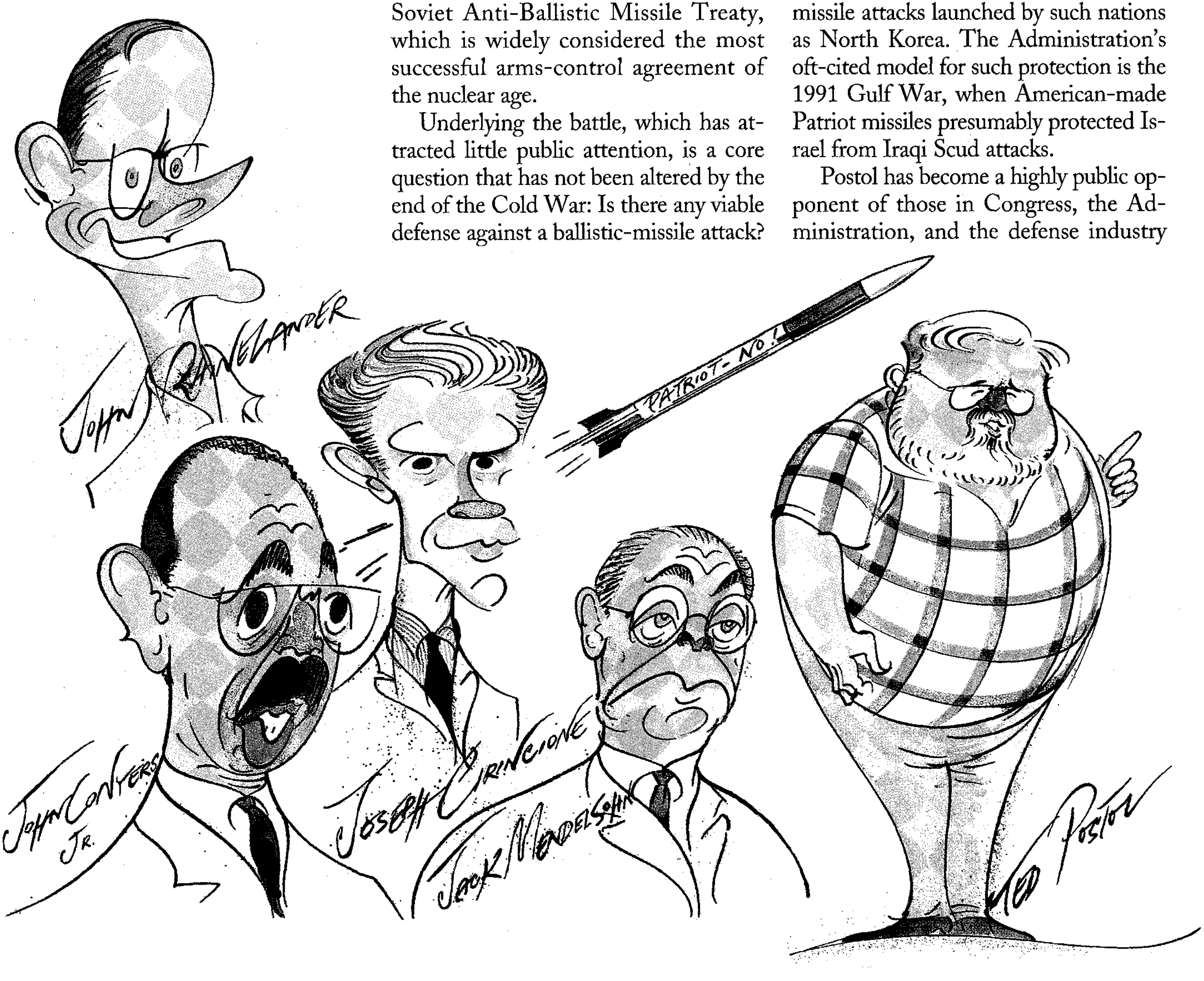
As Bill Clinton heads into his summit with Boris Yeltsin, the Administration is relying on the perceived success of the Patriot missile to push through a new defense system, even though Washington is still bitterly debating evidence of the Patriot's failings in the Gulf War—and the danger of igniting a new arms race.

BY SEYMOUR M. HERSH

PRESIDENT CLINTON has an arms-control problem, and one of his chief antagonists could not be more unlikely: an obscure, portly, bearded, somewhat obsessive forty-eight-year-old defense intellectual named Theodore A. Postol. A professor of science, technology, and national-security policy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Postol was the early catalyst of what has become a ferocious dispute inside Washington's arms-control community over the future of American-Russian nuclear deterrence. At issue is the Clinton Administration's determination to build missile-defense systems that would cost at least fifteen billion dollars over the next five years and would, if Postol and his colleagues are right, or would not, if President Clinton and his National Security Council staff are right, violate the 1972 United States-Soviet Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which is widely considered the most successful arms-control agreement of the nuclear age.

Underlying the battle, which has attracted little public attention, is a core question that has not been altered by the end of the Cold War: Is there any viable defense against a ballistic-missile attack? From 1984 until the end of the Bush Administration, about thirty-four billion dollars was spent on President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, or S.D.I., popularly known as Star Wars, but no S.D.I. systems were ever deployed. The Clinton Administration's proposal, which is now being vigorously disputed in Congress and among arms-control groups, is more limited—aimed at protecting allied nations from short-range missile attacks launched by such nations as North Korea. The Administration's oft-cited model for such protection is the 1991 Gulf War, when American-made Patriot missiles presumably protected Israel from Iraqi Scud attacks.

Postol has become a highly public opponent of those in Congress, the Administration, and the defense industry



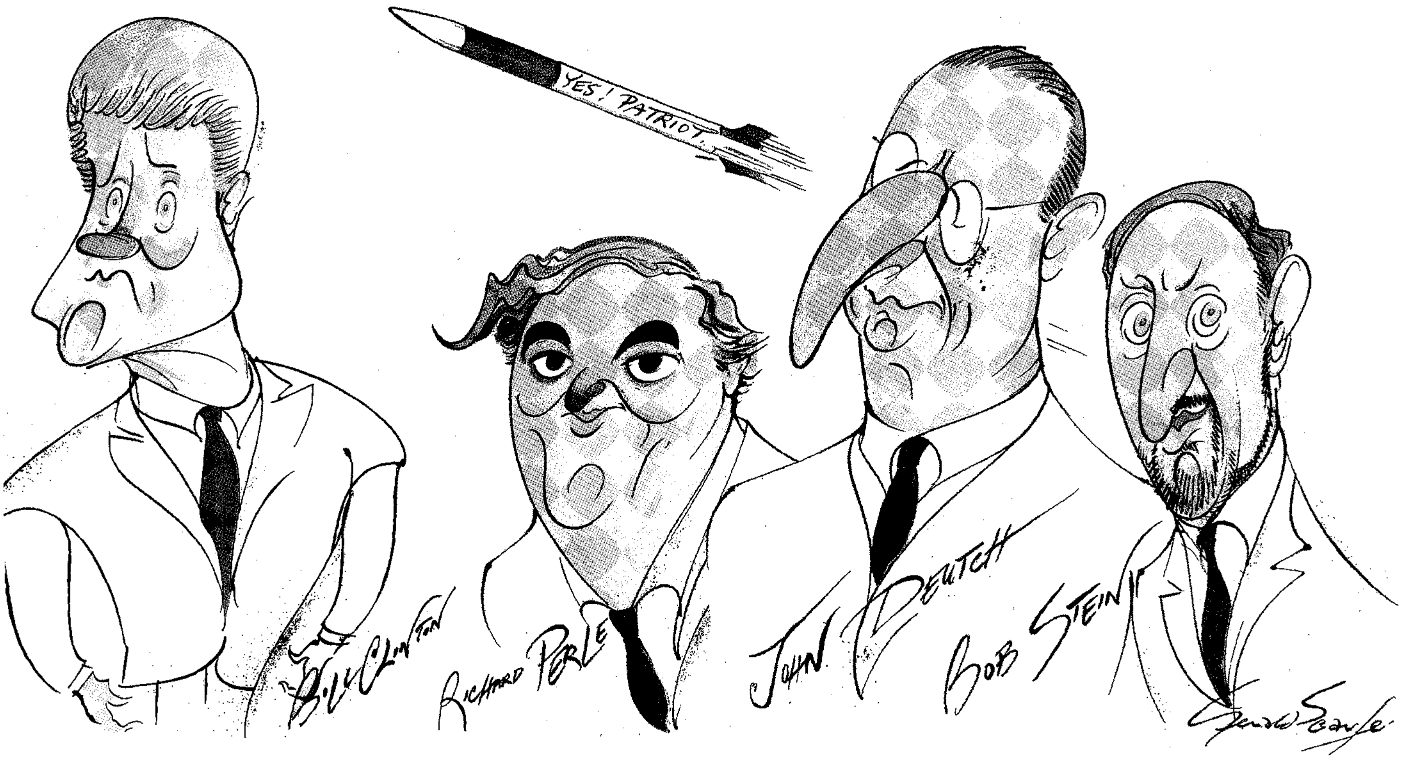
who believe that the United States must protect its allies and its own troops abroad by building an elaborate array of radars, rocket-powered interceptor missiles, and mobile missile launchers known as THAAD, the Army's acronym for its Theatre High-Altitude Area-Defense system. Postol and other analysts believe, as do many legal authorities in the government, that THAAD, if it were to be developed and tested, would breach the A.B.M. treaty simply because it would be capable of destroying both long-range and short-range ballistic missiles. The United States and Russia have reduced their arsenals of intercontinental missiles by roughly twenty-five per cent since the height of the Cold War in the Reagan years, when each side was aware that the other had no defenses against an all-out attack. Further cuts, to some thirty-five hundred warheads on each side, are scheduled to begin once the United States-Russian START II disarmament agreement, signed in early 1993, comes into force. That is unlikely to happen before the end of the year. Critics of THAAD believe that the negotiated reductions over the past two decades would be jeopardized if either the United States or Russia was no longer sure that its smaller arsenals could penetrate the other's defenses. A likely result, these critics say, is that both sides—and also Britain, France, and China, the world's other nuclear powers—would begin expanding and modernizing their offensive capabilities, and the arms race would begin anew.

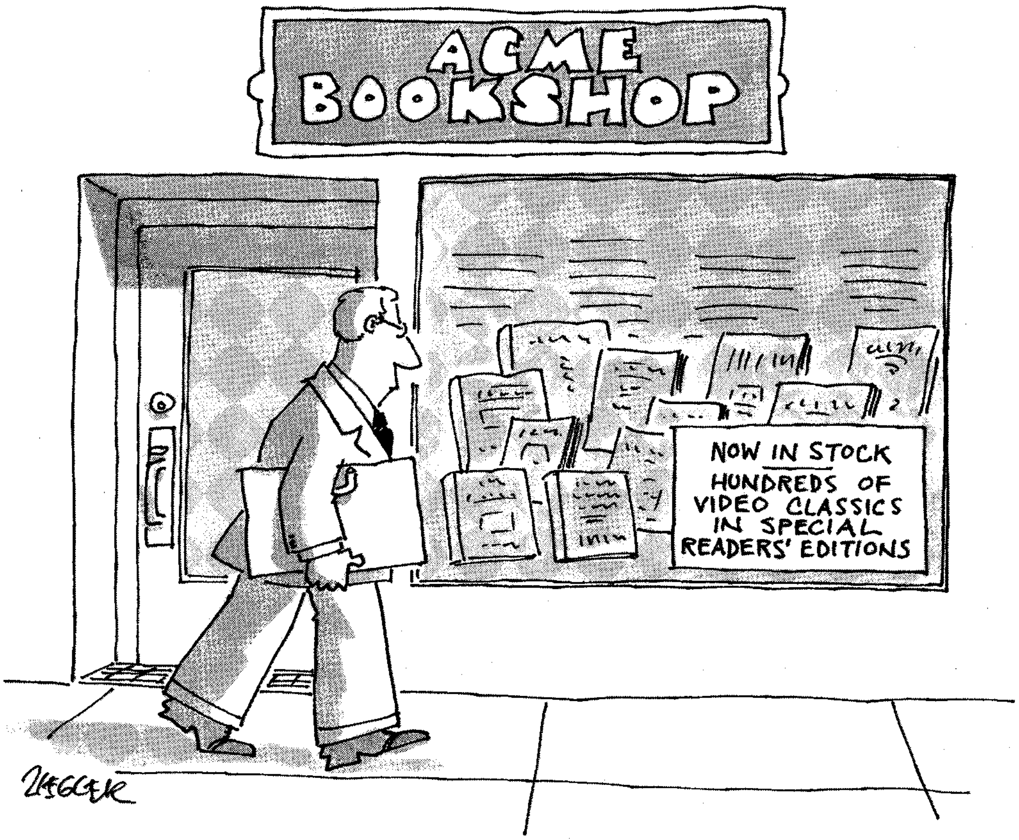
The Clinton Administration, for its part, insists that THAAD, which is being designed to attack ballistic missiles that can travel as far as thirty-five hundred kilometres, is a limited, or theatre, defensive system, outside the scope of the A.B.M. treaty. The treaty bars the United States and Russia from defending their borders against attack by intercontinental missiles that travel ten thousand kilometres or more. The immediate White House goal is to "clarify," or redefine, the A.B.M. treaty, with Russian consent, by supplementing it with language that would permit THAAD to be tested and deployed as soon as possible. The Russians would be free to test and deploy a similar missile-defense system of their own.

The White House sought, unsuccessfully, to resolve its many technical differences with Russia over theatre missile defense before Clinton's summit with Boris Yeltsin, the Russian President, in Washington beginning September 27th, the day after both men are to appear at the United Nations. Nuclear proliferation and economic issues are expected to dominate the two-day meeting.

President Clinton's policy on missile defense is severely complicated by the fact that his Administration is divided on what to do, with senior Navy and Air Force officers arguing that even THAAD is not enough, and that nothing—especially not the A.B.M. treaty, which many in the Pentagon see as a relic of the Cold War—should stand in the way of doing everything possible to defend American troops and allies abroad. The military insists on being free to continue research and testing on missile-defense systems that would clearly violate the A.B.M. treaty. The President is thus caught between those arms-control experts who argue against THAAD and those military experts who demand that the nation return to what amounts to a version of S.D.I. Clinton's advisers have responded to the pressure by telling his critics in Congress and the arms-control community to cool it and stop lobbying against THAAD. "The President cannot be exposed on this," a senior White House aide said during a discussion last fall. "He must be able to defend our boys." The message got through: none of the THAAD critics inside the Administration were willing to discuss their objections with me on the record.

Ted Postol, who has held top-secret security clearances for much of his professional life, seems an improbable

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troublemaker. He has a penchant for communicating by fax, and his left shirt pocket bristles with rulers, a drafting pen, and pencils—the classic nerd pack. But, as the top management of Raytheon Company, which manufactures the Patriot missiles, and other defense contractors have learned, Postol is extraordinarily tenacious. He has needed to be, for he was the first American weapons analyst to publicly criticize the Patriot's performance in the Gulf War, and his doing so put him at war with Raytheon, the Army, and many members of Congress. And it has been Postol's war over the Patriot—the only ballistic-missile defense system with combat experience—that has shaped much of the current debate over THAAD.

One of Postol's earliest memories is of child abuse. "I have images of being in a crib, with my father hitting me and my mother crying," he said recently. "She tried, but she couldn't stop it." Postol never did resolve his relationship with his father, now dead, but he came away from his childhood, in Brooklyn, with the knowledge that, as he puts it, "standing by as people brutalize other people is the wrong thing to do."

In the years when Postol worked his way to undergraduate and advanced degrees at M.I.T., that knowledge became a conviction. It was his reluctance to look the other way that led Postol, in 1979, when he was working as a physicist on research projects at the Argonne National Laboratory, near Chicago, to risk his job by publicly defending the constitutional right of the journalist Howard Morland to publish an article in the magazine *The Progressive* describing how a hydrogen bomb worked.

On April 16, 1991, three months after the Bush Administration's triumphant intervention in the Gulf War, Les Aspin, who was then the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, convened a hearing on the lessons to be learned from the Patriot missile's performance and how that performance related to the future of the Reagan Strategic Defense Initiative. In his opening statement Aspin said, "Can we reason that S.D.I. will work based upon the Patriot's performance?"

The first witness was Richard Perle, a high-level Pentagon official in the Reagan Administration. He testified, "Given the experience we have just been through, watching night after night as the Scud missiles fell on Israel and Saudi Arabia, it is hard to believe that there could still be opposition to the development of a ballistic-missile defense that might do for us what the Patriot did for our friends in the Middle East."

Perle was referring to consistent reports during the war from military spokesmen and from newsmen of Patriot successes in intercepting and destroying Iraqi Scuds. On January 30, 1991, twelve days after the first reported Scud interception, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, the American commander, told a press briefing at his headquarters, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, "The Patriot's success, of course, is known to everyone. It's one hundred per cent—so far, of thirty-three [Scuds] engaged, there have been thirty-three destroyed." President Bush, during a celebratory visit to a Raytheon missile plant in Andover, Massachusetts, on February 15th, similarly provided an upbeat public scorecard. "Patriot is forty-one for forty-two," he said. "Forty-two Scuds engaged, forty-one intercepted." The President added, "I'm sure that some experts would say Patriot's not perfect. No system is; no system ever will be. Not every intercept results in total destruction. But Patriot is proof positive that missile defense works."

The second witness was Postol, who had been asked by Aspin to study the Patriot's performance in combat and report what he found. He began his assessment of the weapon, which had originally been designed, in the nineteen-sixties, primarily as a defense against enemy aircraft, by praising it as a "capable" air-defense system that "has been implemented with great ingenuity and competence." However, once the Patriot was confronted with a Scud, Postol went on, it not only was unable to fully protect Israel but also may have increased "the net level of ground damage relative to the case of no defense." He explained, "That is, when the Patriot defense was used, it appears that the damage per Scud attack was actually higher than when there had been no defense." As for its relevance to Star Wars, Postol testified, "The problems that Patriot had intercepting primitive threats like a Scud underscores how difficult a set of tasks confront S.D.I. . . . We have still not solved any of the fundamental problems that have always confronted strategic-missile defenses."

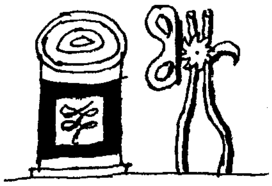
Postol had been critical of numerous proposed missile-defense systems in the past; in the late nineteen-eighties, for example, he and a colleague had published a series of skeptical monographs suggesting that limited North Atlantic Treaty Organization missile-defense systems (comparable to an upgraded Patriot) would be ineffective in stopping a nonnuclear short-range Soviet missile attack. His status as a defense critic was buttressed by the fact that he had served in the Pentagon in the early nineteen-eighties as the assistant for weapons technology to the Chief of Naval Operations—a high-level position, in which he was responsible for detailed analyses of nuclear-war planning and ballistic-missile defenses. In 1991, Postol understood ahead of time that his testimony at the hearing would enrage the numerous S.D.I. supporters in the Pentagon—the ultimate source of many of M.I.T.'s contracts and also of his clearances to classified information. But, he reasoned, he had not volunteered his criticism. When he began his study, Postol says, he had "accepted the ninety-six-per-cent success rate" for the Patriot—one of the Army's early tallies after the war—and "had been stunned by it, because I didn't think it was doable." Then, as he researched what actually happened during the Gulf War, he found that his instincts had been right—it wasn't doable. The findings, Postol said, were so contrary to the public record that he felt as if he had become "a witness to a drive-by shooting in the street." He added, "I had a civic duty to speak out."

Postol's testimony, however, led to no dramatic changes: the House Armed Services Committee did nothing further to investigate the discrepancy between his analysis and the exalted claims of the Patriot's boosters. The Army and Raytheon Company mounted a vigorous counterattack on Postol, with Raytheon suggesting that he and other critics had "their own specific agendas"—a reference to Postol's previous critical views of S.D.I. Raytheon further told news reporters that the Patriot's critics were overlooking those Scuds which, while they were not specifically destroyed by a Patriot interception, were nonetheless damaged or were pushed out of the defended areas and thus struck insignificant targets.

Although many newspapers did report on Postol's testimony in April, there was no meaningful followup, even after the Army acknowledged, a month later, that the Patriot's radar system during the Gulf War had failed to detect a previously observed incoming Scud because of a computer-programming error; the Scud struck a barracks near Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, killing twenty-eight American military people.

Raytheon is reported to have received dozens of inquiries from foreign nations on the Patriot system (each firing battery includes up to sixty-four missiles and a radar, and costs upward of a hundred million dollars), and the price of its stock climbed nearly twenty per cent, from more than sixty-eight dollars a share to more than eighty-one, between mid-January, when Operation Desert Storm began, and mid-May of 1991.

In November of 1991, Congress, responding to the continued public perception of the Patriot's success in defending Israelis and American troops during the Gulf War, approved a conference report on the National Defense Authorization Act—the annual military budget—directing the Secretary of Defense to "aggressively pursue the development of advanced theater missile defense systems." The Defense Secretary was instructed that his objective should be the deployment of such systems, to include an upgraded version of the Patriot, by the mid-nineteen-nineties.



POSTOL was unfazed by the lack of positive response to his testimony. He continued his research into the Patriot, with the help of two M.I.T. colleagues—George N. Lewis, a physicist and researcher at M.I.T.'s Defense and Arms Control Studies Program, and Reuven Pedatzur, a political scientist and former Israeli fighter pilot. In January of 1992, Postol published in *International Security*, a Harvard University quarterly, a lengthy analysis that amounted to a devastating indictment of the weapon's performance. Postol concluded that "our first wartime experience with tactical ballistic-missile defense resulted in what may have been an almost total failure to intercept quite primitive attacking missiles." Furthermore, he wrote, "There is no clear evidence that it reduced ground damage in Israel." Relying on information obtained by Pedatzur, Postol also reported that a senior man in the Israeli military had independently reached the same conclusions.

Postol's attack was immediately challenged in a letter to *International Security* by Robert M. Stein, the manager of Raytheon's Advanced Air Defense Programs, and the letter led to a forty-two-page exchange in the summer issue of the quarterly. By the time Stein drafted his letter, the Army had begun what would be a series of revisions of its success rate for the Patriot, and was claiming that the missiles had successfully engaged more than eighty per cent of the Scuds in Saudi Arabia and more than fifty per cent in Israel. Stein's essential defense was that the Army's new statistics of success were highly reliable because they "were based largely upon the findings of independent assessment teams," composed of personnel from the Army's Ballistic Research Laboratory and the Israel Defense Forces that had collected data in Saudi Arabia and Israel. "These teams . . . examined [Scud] craters and remnants on the ground," Stein wrote. "The U.S. Army then correlated these findings with additional data, such as digital recordings of Patriot firing events, hard copy data from the operator consoles, and operator notes." Stein further claimed that there was "clear evidence" that the Patriot, by diverting Scuds away from heavily populated areas in Israel, had saved lives and resulted in minimal property damage.

Stein's letter was not the only response to Postol's article. Shortly after its publication, Postol learned that he was under an intense investigation by the Pentagon for allegedly publishing classified information about the Patriot. Raytheon officials subsequently acknowledged that they had sent excerpts of a draft of Postol's article to the Army and the Pentagon's Defense Investigative

PROSPECTS

We have set out from here for the sublime
Pastures of summer shade and mountain stream;
I have no doubt we shall arrive on time.

Is all the green of that enamelled prime
A snapshot recollection or a dream?
We have set out from here for the sublime

Without provisions, without one thin dime,
And yet, for all our clumsiness, I deem
It certain that we shall arrive on time.

No guidebook tells you if you'll have to climb
Or swim. However foolish we may seem,
We have set out from here for the sublime

And must get past the scene of an old crime
Before we falter and run out of steam,
Riddled by doubt that we'll arrive on time.

Yet even in winter a pale paradigm
Of birdsong utters its obsessive theme.
We have set out from here for the sublime;
I have no doubt we shall arrive on time.

—Anthony Hecht

Service citing their security concerns, thus triggering not only an inquiry by the D.I.S. but also an increasingly personal dispute. Documents released to Postol under the Freedom of Information Act show that Raytheon wanted to prevent the publication of Postol's original article in *International Security*. Postol claims that after failing to do so Raytheon and the Army sought to muzzle him. (Both Raytheon and the Army deny this.) In March of 1992, a month before he was scheduled to testify before a House Government Operations subcommittee on the Patriot, he was officially informed by a representative of the D.I.S. that he could not speak in public about his article without "being in violation of his secrecy agreement with the government." Representative John Conyers, Jr., Democrat of Michigan, who is the chairman of the Government Operations Committee, came to Postol's defense, by publicly accusing the Pentagon of placing a "gag order" on Postol in an attempt to stifle criticism of the Patriot.

The Pentagon backed down. Conyers and Postol were told in late March that a review panel of weapons-systems experts had determined that Postol's "experience and background, combined with open source data" could have allowed him to write his Patriot analysis without using classified information.

JOHN CONYERS became involved with the Patriot's performance as a result of one of those quirky Washington coincidences which can make or break a public issue. Conyers, who was first elected to Congress in 1964, assumed the chairmanship of the House Government Operations Committee, and also of its important subcommittee on legislation and national security, in 1989. In 1991, having become increasingly skeptical of overclassification and bureaucratic zealotry, he hired Joseph Cirincione, who had spent six years as a defense analyst for the House Armed Services Committee, and gave him free rein to seek out high-impact issues for the national-security subcommittee. As soon as Cirincione came on board, he launched investigations into the Star Wars program, which by the end of 1991 led him to the issue of the Patriot's performance.

Cirincione's initial step was to summon Army officials and ask them for a complete briefing on the Patriot's performance. "They gave us the same briefing they'd given everyone," Cirincione said in a recent interview. "Then we asked for what no one else had asked for." That was the backup data to support the Army's revised claim of what averaged out to a seventy-per-cent success rate in destroying, disabling, or diverting the Iraqi Scuds during the Gulf War. After some "hemming and hawing," Cirincione says, the Army finally agreed to permit the subcommittee and a group of experts it assembled, including defense analysts from the three leading congressional research facilities—the General Accounting Office, the Congressional Research Service, and the Office of Technology Assessment—to get a firsthand briefing at the headquarters of the Patriot Missile Program, in Huntsville, Alabama.

The Army began its briefing by explaining that it defined an engagement as successful if the Patriot disabled or destroyed an incoming warhead or if the Patriot caused the incoming warhead to change course and land outside a protected area in Israel or Saudi Arabia. However, as Richard Davis, then the director of Army issues in the General Accounting Office's National Security and International Affairs Division, later told the Conyers subcommittee, the data that the Army subsequently supplied "had serious limitations and did not support [the] assessment" of a seventy-per-cent success rate.

The group had been presented with a computer-generated spreadsheet, prepared by the Army's Training and Doctrine Command, that displayed, among other things, the date of each Scud launch, the Patriot unit or units involved, and the results. "The spreadsheet was actually an inaccurate summary of information obtained through telephone calls to various units in the Gulf, Army staff offices in the Pentagon, or the Patriot project office," Davis later testified. "In addition, many gaps and inconsistencies existed between the data presented on the spreadsheet and the supporting records. For example, there were several instances in which Patriot operators reported destroying more Scud warheads than there were missiles launched. In other instances, the supporting telephone record showed the Scud was diverted from a protected area, but the spreadsheet showed the Scud's warhead was destroyed. In some cases there were no records supporting the spreadsheet entries."

Similar difficulties arose concerning the draft report on ground damage that had been prepared by the Army's Ballistic Research Laboratory—one of the "teams" of investigators cited so approvingly by Raytheon's Stein in his *International Security* rebuttal to Postol. In fact, the "team" analysis turned out to be "based on the efforts of one engineer" who worked in Saudi Arabia for five days in February and nineteen days in March of 1991, Davis testified. All the visits to damage sites took place "days or weeks after an impact, when craters had often been filled and missile debris removed," he added. (Raytheon subsequently informed the subcommittee that Stein "now knows" that only one Army analyst went to Saudi Arabia.)

After the group returned from Huntsville, Conyers readily agreed to schedule hearings on the Patriot's performance, and Ted Postol was invited to testify. "The story started with Ted," Cirincione said. "If he hadn't stayed with it and written the article, we wouldn't have had the investigation."

Once confronted with public hearings, Raytheon, working closely with the Army, sought to discredit Postol's case at the point where it was believed to be weakest: his reliance on television videotapes to demonstrate that Patriots had failed to destroy Scud warheads. Little was left to chance. The key witness against Postol, Peter D. Zimmerman, who was then a visiting senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (C.S.I.S.), in Washington, began his testimony by asserting, "I am not here to support anybody's scorecard. I am not here to support the results of the Army . . . or anyone else as to whether or not the Patriot knocked out X, Y, or Z per cent of incoming warheads. I am primarily here to talk about the question of obtaining and using videotaped evidence." Zimmerman's essential point was that the frame rate of commercial videotape—thirty frames a second—was too slow to show with scientific precision what was going on, given that the closing velocity of both the Scud and the Patriot approach was nearly ten thousand miles an hour.

To buttress his point, Zimmerman, with permission from Conyers, produced a series of charts and began showing a video that would, he said, "demonstrate the limitations of a conventional television in observing high-speed events." This colloquy followed:

CONYERS: Who prepared the film?

ZIMMERMAN: Raytheon prepared it because I don't have access to the kind of video equipment that it takes to do it.

CONYERS: They prepared the charts as well?

ZIMMERMAN: They drew them. However, I did the rough drawing. I don't have an Art Department at C.S.I.S.

At another point in the hearing, Conyers was questioning Brigadier General Robert Drolet, an Army specialist in air defense, about President Bush's claim while visiting Raytheon's Andover plant in February of 1991 that the Patriot had intercepted forty-one out of forty-two Scuds engaged.

CONYERS: Well, was he in error?

DROLET: No, sir.

CONYERS: So he was correct when he said forty-one out of forty-two Scuds were intercepted?

DROLET: Yes, sir.

CONYERS: You have records to back that up?

DROLET: Intercepted?

CONYERS: Yes, sir.

DROLET: Yes, sir. He did not say killed or destroyed. He said intercepted. That means that a Scud came in and a Patriot was fired. But he did not say and we did not say, nor did we ever say, that it meant all of the Scuds were killed.

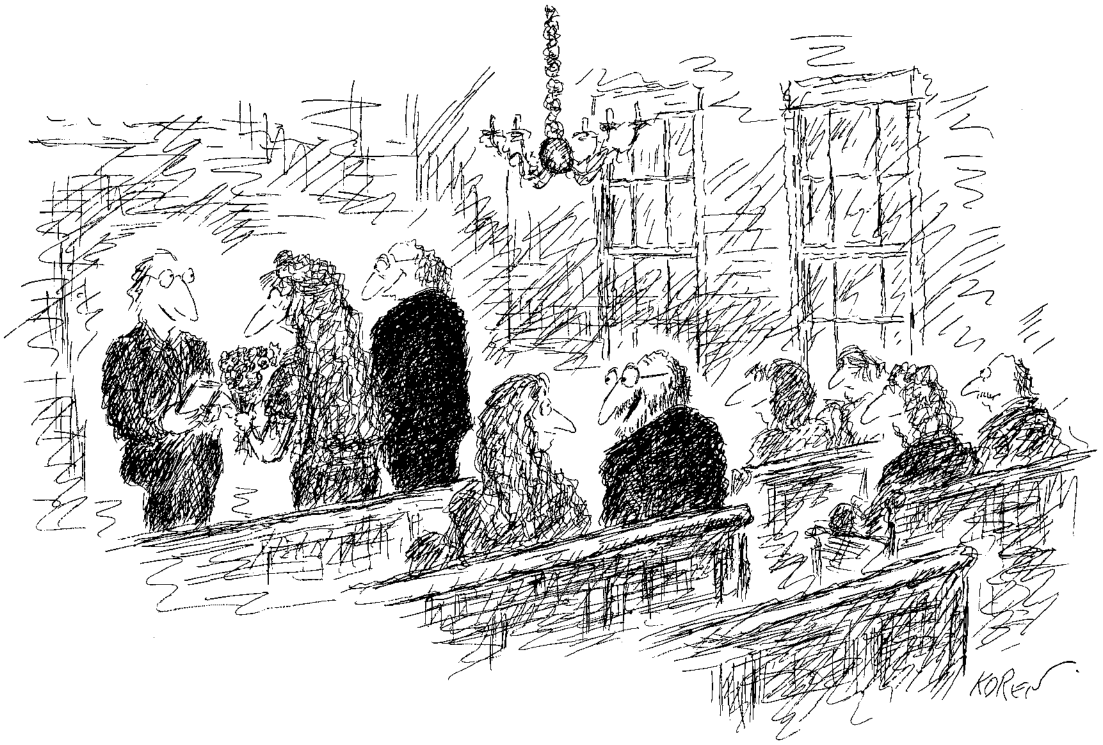
CONYERS: He didn't mean that they were killed? He meant intercepted, meaning what in military jargon?

DROLET: . . . He just means that a Patriot and a Scud crossed paths, their paths in the sky. It was engaged.

CONYERS: They passed each other in the sky?

DROLET: Yes, sir.

The Army's anger at Conyers' probing—and the public debunking of the Patriot's success in the Gulf War—came through most vividly in connection with the testimony of Postol's M.I.T. colleague Reuven Pedatzur, who was also a researcher at the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, at Tel Aviv University, and a journalist. Pedatzur, an Israeli



"I've been to all his weddings."

Air Force reserve officer, had used his military contacts to develop on-the-scene evidence of the Patriot's performance. He testified that senior Israeli officers had told him that they knew of only one Scud warhead that was hit by a Patriot. Pedatzur further said that four Patriots had struck populated areas in Israel shortly after being fired—an indication that the missile's self-destruct mechanism was defective.

Asked about Pedatzur's testimony, Colonel David Heebner, who commanded the Patriot forces in Israel, lost his cool. "Sir, I will tell you that I have not been trained to impugn the integrity of other people, and I don't want to do that today, but I never saw that gentleman before," he said. "Frankly, I am appalled that he is allowed to be here in this forum where democracy speaks and say things like he said." Heebner would have been even more upset if he had seen a still-classified Israeli defense-establishment report of the Patriot's performance, for the assessment, based on Israeli Air Force data, closely paralleled Pedatzur's testimony. Completed in mid-1991 and circulated throughout the Israeli government, the report concluded that "there is *no* clear evidence of a single successful intercept" of an Iraqi Scud by the Patriot, and added, "There is, however, circumstantial evidence for one possible intercept." The report noted that eight of the fifty-seven Patriots launched in Israel had malfunctioned shortly after lift-off and crashed into the ground. Eleven missiles were fired at false targets—ones that turned out not to exist. The defense-establishment report listed three reasons for the failure of the Patriot: that it was developed as an anti-aircraft missile and modified to intercept simple ballistic missiles; that the Iraqi Scud not only travelled much faster than any aircraft but also tumbled and disintegrated as it entered Israeli airspace, presenting "the Patriot with an unexpectedly challenging and complex target that was not a simple ballistic missile"; and that the Patriot's fuse-and-warhead system was simply not good enough to cope with the high closing speeds presented by the Scuds.

In a later taped interview with Pedatzur, Moshe Arens, who was Israel's Minister of Defense during the Gulf War, reinforced the report's findings. When Arens was asked how many Scuds had been intercepted by the Patriot, he responded, "I don't have the exact statistics, but the number is minuscule, and is in fact meaningless."

THE Conyers hearings provided another spate of negative newspaper and television stories about the Patriot's effectiveness in the Gulf War. A draft report, written by Joseph Cirincione, recapitulated the devastating testimony before the subcommittee and called for Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney to conduct an independent analysis of the Patriot's performance.

The draft report made it clear that Postol's findings, which were based on his analysis of television videotapes and secondhand reports from Israel, had been supported by other testimony and by the subcommittee staff's investigation. For example, Steven A. Hildreth, a defense specialist for the Congressional Research Service, testified that in his opinion the Army could claim one Scud warhead kill during the Gulf War. "When I applied the Army's methodology and data, at least one claim of a warhead kill appears to have sufficiently credible data for every one of the assessment categories. We did not find that degree of sufficiency in the others claimed by the Army," Hildreth, who had attended the Patriot-headquarters meeting at Huntsville, said. There was a similar report from the General Accounting Office: its experts concluded that only about nine per cent of the Patriot-Scud engagements were supported by the strongest evidence that an engagement resulted in a warhead kill.

The draft report's findings had obvious implications for the proposed theatre missile-defense system. "Unless the Army analysis is corrected, pivotal decisions the Administration and the Congress must make on the Patriot program, on the future course for theatre ballistic-missile defense, and on the feasibility of strategic defenses will be based on a false impression of our actual current capabilities," the report noted. "More importantly, soldiers' lives could be unnecessarily endangered if they are deployed in future conflicts based on optimistic assessments of the Patriot's capabilities."

In a recent interview, Cirincione agreed that one of the most disturbing legacies of the exaggerated

SCHOOL NEWS
DONNELLY

"This place reeks of education."

claims for the Patriot was its impact on the current debate over the proposed THAAD system. "We all saw what we wanted to see during the Gulf War," Cirincione said. "To this day, people still think the weapon worked. 'It was on TV.' . . . The public and Congress think we can now have an effective theatre missile defense. This isn't just an academic dispute between Ted Postol and Bob Stein. There are serious consequences here."

By mid-1992, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Marine Corps were all requesting—and getting—hundreds of millions of dollars for research and development for differing versions of a proposed theatre missile-defense system. Those systems, if approved by Congress, would require the expenditure of as much as thirty-five billion dollars in new missiles and new radar systems, among other things, by the year 2000. And Raytheon knew that if it could somehow get past the dispute over the Patriot it was in line for a major slice of the pie.

• •

THAAD's supporters have been careful, in congressional testimony, to note that the system, unlike the Patriot, which was rushed into action in the Gulf War, is being specifically designed to meet the current and future ballistic threat from the Third World. Its long-range interceptors, scheduled to begin testing next year, are programmed to strike enemy missiles at longer range and at higher altitudes than the Patriot, giving additional protection to the defended areas. THAAD's potential did not, however, prevent Japan—considered by American authorities to be facing a direct threat from North Korea—from resisting high-level Clinton Administration entreaties last year that it help subsidize the system.

RAYTHEON went to war against Cirincione and his draft report, designating as its chief lobbyists lawyers from Arent Fox Kintner Plotkin & Kahn, a high-powered, high-priced Washington law firm. The lobbyists argued that the subcommittee report was biased in not noting that the Patriot performed extraordinarily well, under hectic circumstances, in combatting Scuds. They accused the subcommittee staff of being the captive of special interests, including anti-S.D.I. groups. Within a few weeks, Cirincione's draft report was history: although it had made its way through the subcommittee, all the Republicans on the House Government Operations Committee and enough of the Democrats to tip the balance agreed that it should not be published.

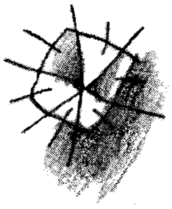
Cirincione, who now works on arms-control issues for the Henry L. Stimson Center, a nonprofit think tank in Washington, is still awed by how easily his draft report got buried. "It was a Presidential-election year, and they put on an all-out lobbying blitz," he said recently. "They told Republican members of the committee that it was anti-business and anti-S.D.I. They told Democrats that it would take jobs from their districts."

The campaign against the subcommittee staff's draft report eventually turned into a campaign against the integrity and the reputations of Cirincione and Postol. Postol was depicted as a self-serving academic fraud (although Raytheon denies doing so), and, in interviews in the spring for this article, I was urged by one Raytheon lobbyist to check into the reason that Cirincione had left John Conyers' staff. I was also assured that Postol had been paid for his testimony by what the lobbyist said was "one of the liberal anti-S.D.I. groups." (Postol did receive a five-thousand-dollar grant for his Patriot research from the Ploughshares Fund, an anti-S.D.I. foundation based in San Francisco, but this grant, which had no preconditions, was made in November of 1991, before the House subcommittee began its inquiry.) The lobbyist further described Postol's analyses as "snake oil" and said his research was "sloppy as shit."

In a subsequent conversation, Julian Epstein, the staff director of the House Government Operations Committee, told me that Cirincione was "absolutely one of the best investigators we ever had," and went on to say, "He's superb, and the chairman"—Conyers—"did everything he could to keep him. Joe's as straight a shooter as they come."

Similarly, Frank von Hippel, a Princeton University physicist who is now an assistant director for national security in the White House office of the Presidential science adviser, described Postol as "one of the strongest analysts in this game, and he's right on this one"—the Patriot dispute. "I have complete confidence in him."

Raytheon's hard line and its insistence on making personal allegations about the integrity of Joseph Cirincione and Ted Postol created enormous tension for some Army officers. "Joe's hardheaded, but I believe he was sincere," I was told by Bruce E. Kasold, a recently retired Army lieutenant colonel who was the senior Army counsel for the Conyers hearings. An official who did not want to be identified further recalled, "There was a big disagreement between Raytheon and the Army over Joe. The company wanted to go after him. They wanted me to be tougher, and I said, 'We ain't got the facts.' "



In the aftermath of the Gulf War, the official explained, the Army was constantly "looking for ways of improving the reported Patriot accuracy." In the end, the Army adopted the public position—endorsed by Raytheon—that "if a Scud was fired and coming at us and didn't hit anything, didn't blow up anything near us, we're going to say it's a hit," he said. "When I got into this and looked at this, I said, 'This is bullshit. The emperor has no clothes. The Army is wrong.' "

This official, working inside the chain of command, eventually won agreement for a revised study, which analyzed each claimed successful interception of a Scud with varying degrees of confidence—high, medium, or low. "Now we are able to say what we *think* happened," the official explained. "Scuds are coming at us. We shot our Patriots up and nothing came down. . . . It doesn't make common sense to me that all the misses missed without having anything to do with the Patriot. So the answer is 'We don't know.' " The Army's retreat from its public claims of success in the Gulf War was hindered by the top management of Raytheon, the official said. "Raytheon brought the Army into a mess it didn't need," and the all-out effort to quash the subcommittee staff's draft report "led to a tremendous amount of skepticism on that and other committees."

BILL CLINTON'S election gave Cirincione and Conyers renewed hope. Les Aspin was named Secretary of Defense, and William J. Perry, the newly appointed Deputy Secretary of Defense, had testified, as had Postol, at Aspin's April, 1991, hearings into the implications of the Patriot's performance for S.D.I. Perry had been straightforward in his criticism of the Patriot, telling Aspin that it was "not an effective anti-ballistic-missile-defense system. . . . There is no reason to believe, based on the design of the Patriot, that it is capable of being effective against a ballistic missile with countermeasures; that is, where there are five, six, or seven apparent targets out there."

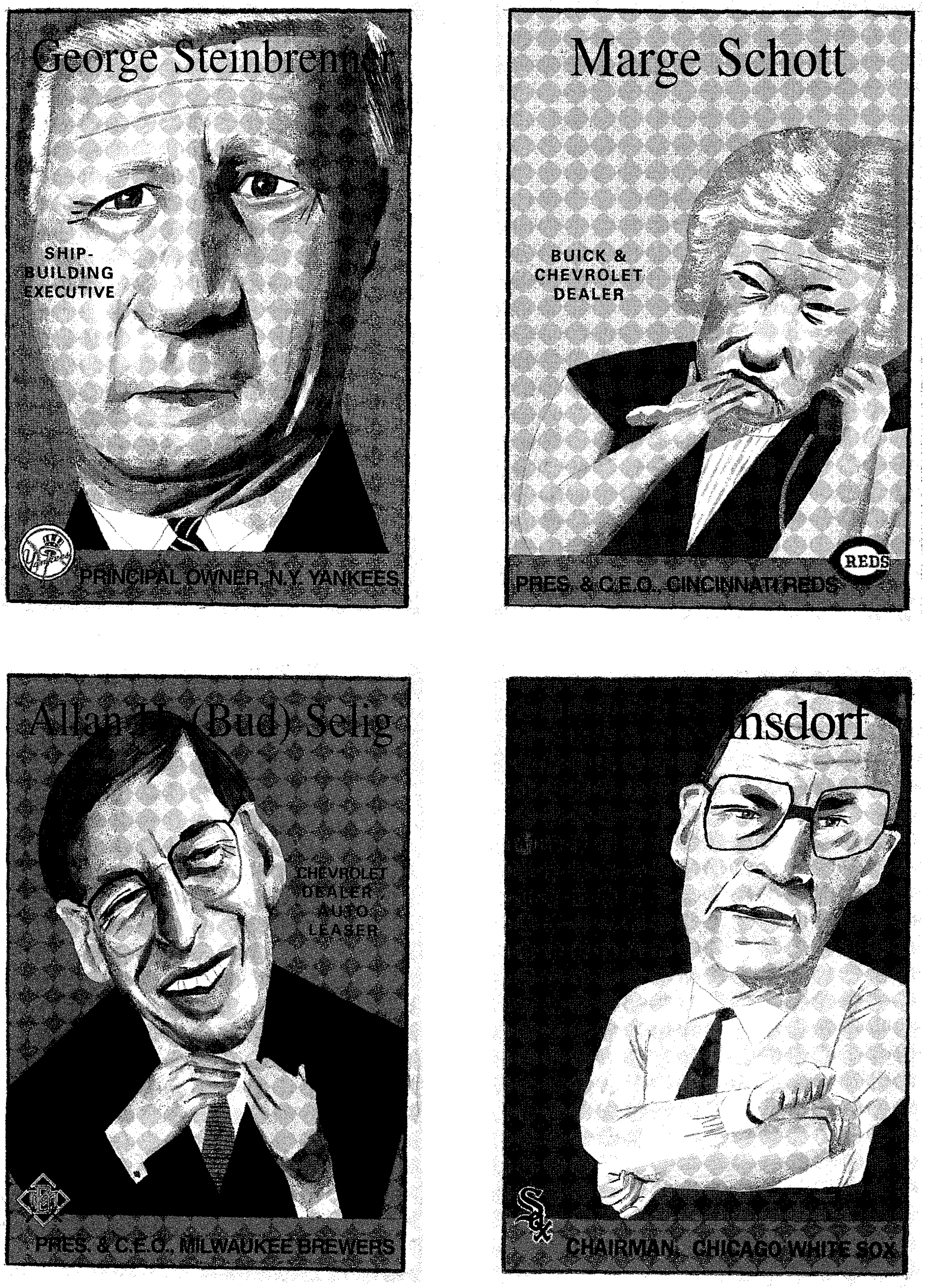
In late January of 1993, Conyers wrote to Aspin, again urging an independent evaluation of the Patriot missile's performance in the Gulf War. "More is at stake here than simply deciding a dispute among scientists," Conyers wrote, noting that the government was on the verge of spending billions of dollars for new theatre missile-defense systems. "It is critical that we learn the lessons of the past before making decisions for future systems." Aspin did not respond, but John M. Deutch, then Under-Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology, did, telling Conyers that an independent review would not "add significantly to our knowledge." Deutch had been the provost at M.I.T. before joining the Pentagon staff and was considered as knowledgeable and realistic on defense issues as anyone in the Clinton Administration. He was also known to be a supporter of theatre missile defense. So Conyers tried again, telling Deutch, in a letter dated May 25, 1993, that an all-out review of the Patriot was "crucial" before Congress could be asked to evaluate the Defense Department's billion-dollar request for new missile systems.

Deutch's response left no doubt that the Pentagon's new leadership did not want any lingering questions about the Patriot's performance in the Gulf War to tarnish its view that theatre missile defense was essential to America's national security. "I believe the Army conducted a thorough analysis of the available combat data and observations," Deutch wrote, ignoring the published subcommittee hearing, the unpublished subcommittee-staff draft report, and the criticisms by the General Accounting Office and the Congressional Research Service. "The Department is convinced that the Army and the Patriot air defense system performed in an exemplary fashion, given the design limitations of the Patriot . . . and the combat environment during the Gulf War."

Early this year, however, the Pentagon turned away from an advanced version of the Patriot and selected a missile being developed by Loral Vought Systems, of Dallas, Texas, to complement the Patriot system and serve as a low-altitude backup to THAAD. It was a billion-dollar blow to Raytheon, and a setback in the firm's campaign against its Gulf War critics. In an interview in June, Raytheon's Stein acknowledged something that no one at Raytheon had publicly acknowledged before: that some of Ted Postol's video evidence had merit. "Ted had videos that showed where Patriots went into the ground," Stein said. "There also were incontrovertible videos that tell you where you had big misses. Where Ted's analysis goes beyond value is where things are so close. Those are the interesting cases." No one, Stein added—not Postol, not the Army, and not Raytheon—has any basis for knowing from the available video evidence what happened in those missions where the Patriot got close to the Scud and exploded, creating an impenetrable fireball. "We had no independent data," Stein told me, but said that "common sense" would suggest that the Patriot had worked if it had detonated in the general area of an incoming Iraqi Scud and if the Scud caused no significant damage on the ground. Stein

CARD FILE • BY MARK ULRIKSEN

THE REAL PLAYERS


George Steinbrenner
SHIP-BUILDING EXECUTIVE
PRINCIPAL OWNER, N.Y. YANKEES
Marge Schott
BUICK & CHEVROLET DEALER
REDS
PRES. & C.E.O., CINCINNATI REDS
Allan H. (Bud) Selig
CHEVROLET DEALER AUTO LEASER
PRES. & C.E.O., MILWAUKEE BREWERS
nsdorf
Sox
CHAIRMAN, CHICAGO WHITE SOX

Grab these cards, fans, as the great unseason begins. Watch their value go up as Bud and Jerry turn the doublespeak out there, and Big George runs down the Bronx on the base paths! Who needs the World Series, with these collectibles in hand?

added, "Ted would say, 'Is there any evidence that the Scud wasn't a dud to begin with?' We'd be the first to stand and say, 'Hey, I can't prove that to you.' "

JOHN DEUTCH, Bill Perry, and their colleagues in the Pentagon, who continue today to suggest publicly that the Patriot's performance in the Gulf War proves that theatre missile-defense systems can save American lives in combat, are in the driver's seat as the Clinton Administration nears a controversial decision on how, or if, to deploy THAAD.

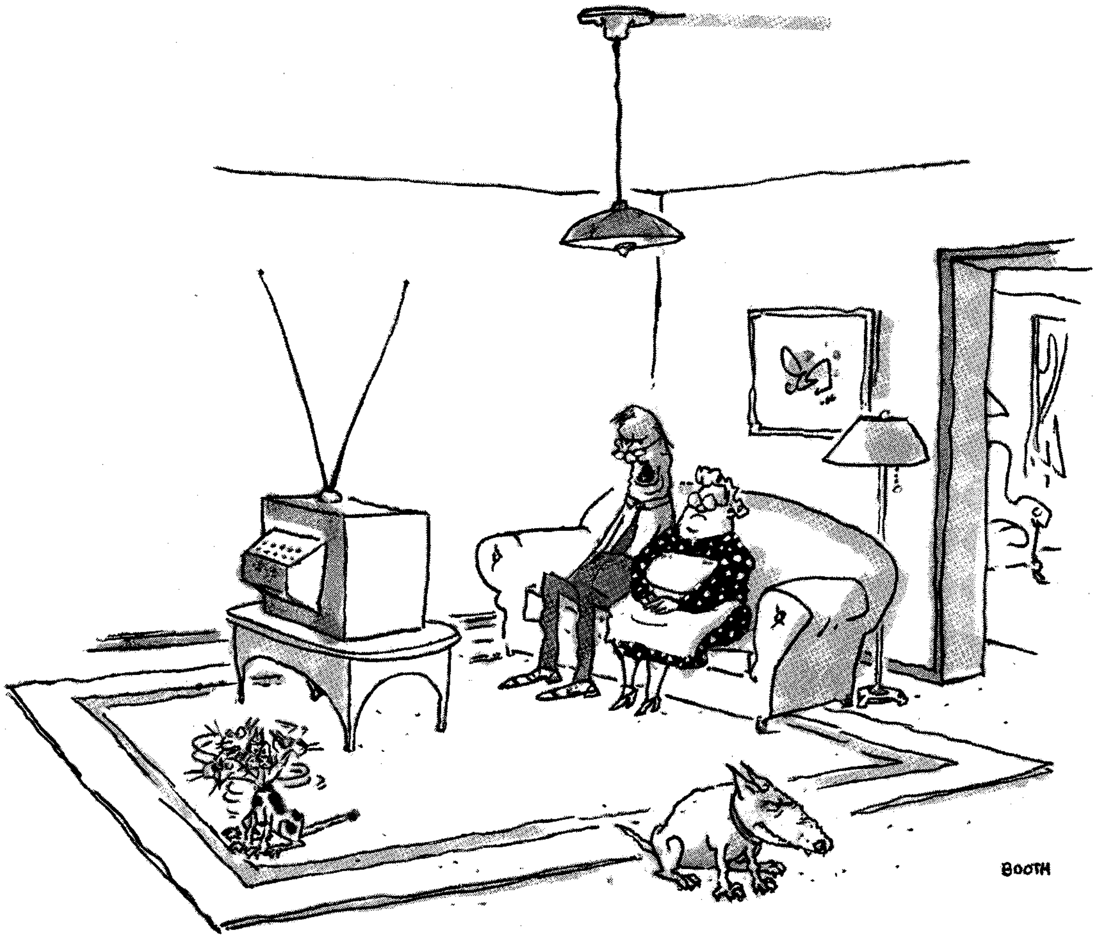
The White House's problem centers on the fact that the 1972 A.B.M. treaty, in barring defenses against intercontinental ballistic missiles, did not formally define a strategic missile or the difference between strategic and theatre ballistic-missile defenses; there has simply been a general understanding, based on testimony given to the Senate during ratification hearings, that any missile travelling at two kilometres a second or less is not strategic. Therefore, any defense against such a missile would be excluded from the provisions. In the current debate, the Administration has conceded that a modern defensive system—such as THAAD—capable of intercepting targets travelling as fast as five kilometres a second, with a range of about thirty-five hundred kilometres, would violate the treaty. (ICBMs travel at speeds of up to seven kilometres a second and have ranges of about ten thousand kilometres.)

One obvious solution is to formally amend the A.B.M. treaty to exclude theatre missile-defense systems such as THAAD—a process that the Pentagon and the White House abhor, because it would potentially involve extended ratification hearings not only by the Senate but also by the legislative bodies of the former members of the Soviet Union that are now nuclear powers. The United States, in essence, could be held hostage by Ukraine or Kazakhstan. So could Russia, which is as eager as the Clinton White House to deploy its own version of a more advanced theatre missile-defense system.

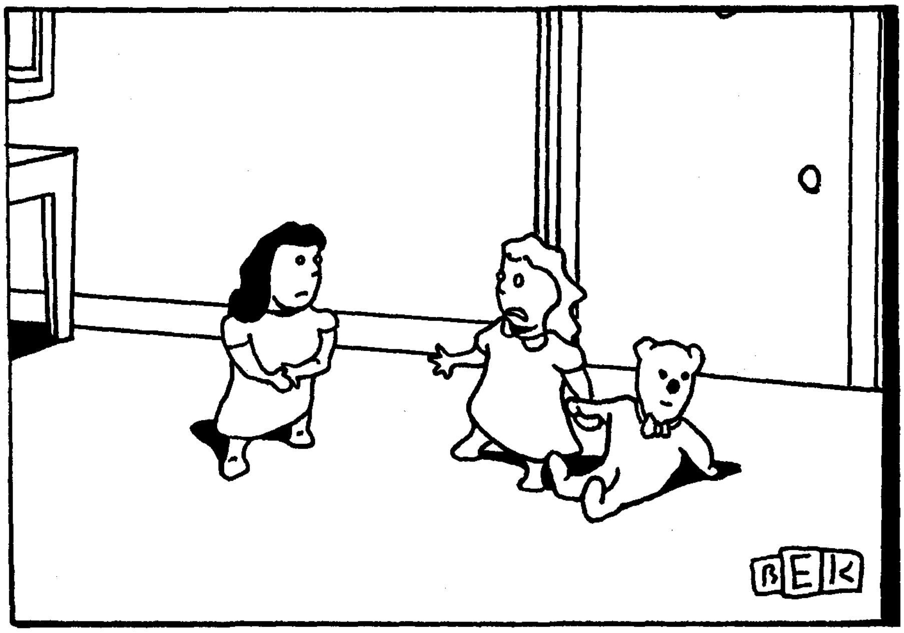
The Administration, with Russian concurrence, devised what seemed to be a brilliant solution for the potentially fatal impasse: the two parties would "clarify" the A.B.M. treaty by agreeing on language providing that so long as THAAD and its Russian counterpart are not "tested" against any missiles travelling faster than five kilometres a second, they are therefore not "capable" of intercepting ICBMs and will not threaten the initial basis of the A.B.M. treaty. In a series of briefings over the past nine months, Robert G. Bell, a National Security Council aide, who has emerged as the President's key arms-control operative, has attempted to convince a skeptical arms-control community that THAAD would not have a "demonstrated" capacity against ICBMs, and thus would not violate the A.B.M. treaty, as administratively "clarified." There would then be no need for the Senate to formally amend the A.B.M. treaty.

On the other side of the issue are Postol, his M.I.T. colleagues, and a number of arms-control groups, including the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Arms Control Association, and the Federation of American Scientists. They argue that the proposed "clarification" is a canard, because THAAD, if it proved to be capable of destroying warheads that travel at five kilometres a second, would also be effective in defending a smaller area against ICBMs launched from much farther away and travelling at seven kilometres a second. (It is a fact of missile trajectory that a missile travelling at five kilometres a second has a range of about thirty-five hundred kilometres; a missile travelling at seven kilometres a second has a range of about ten thousand kilometres.)

Interviews over the past several months have revealed a not surprising unanimity among the various arms-control groups



"I just now dreamed I was in bed watching TV."



"He's my enabler."

over the threat posed by THAAD. For example, Spurgeon M. Keeny, Jr., the president of the Arms Control Association and an elder spokesman for the arms-control lobby, who served in national-security posts under both Democratic and Republican Presidents since the nineteen-fifties, has railed in interviews and in congressional testimony against the Administration's approach and against Congress's apparent lack of interest in the issue. In Keeny's view, the Scuds, despite their success in getting through to targets in Israel and Saudi Arabia, made no difference in the war's outcome. "These highly inaccurate missiles, when armed with conventional warheads, do not present a serious threat to U.S. forces in the field," he said. "The Administration has gone alarmingly far down the path to an unnecessary and, I believe, dangerous response to a greatly exaggerated threat."

"Clinton has gone back to Ronald Reagan and the magic Peace Shield of 1983," said John Pike, of the Federation of American Scientists, caustically referring to a once popular name for S.D.I. The main threat, he said, still comes from the thousands of Russian high-yield hydrogen bombs aimed at the United States, and not from the developing world, whose adversaries are nearby and whose ballistic missiles have ranges of less than a thousand kilometres. "The logic of the A.B.M. treaty that prevailed during the Cold War continues to prevail," he said.

The Administration does have some support for THAAD among the arms-control community—most prominently, Sidney Graybeal, a longtime Central Intelligence Agency official, who was one of the original negotiators of the A.B.M. treaty. Graybeal, who retired from the C.I.A. in 1979 and is now a consultant in Washington, believes that any potential threat to the 1972 treaty is more than outweighed by the theatre ballistic-missile threat facing the United States and its allies. "More than thirty types of ballistic missiles are either operational or under development in the Third World," Graybeal recently told Congress. "In the time that it will take to field an effective defense against these missiles—five to eight years—the more capable of these delivery systems could further proliferate and additional new missiles could appear."

In a recent interview, Graybeal defended the Administration's call for a "clarification" of the A.B.M. treaty and took issue with his colleagues for what he called their "camel's nose under the tent" approach. "Spurgeon [Keeny] sees this as S.D.I. all over again," Graybeal said. "They just don't trust—don't believe it's a new Administration."

The decision on the fate of THAAD should fall to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, which has jurisdiction over United States treaty commitments. The committee held hearings in March and in May, with few Republican members in attendance, and it was unclear whether the senators would accept the Administration's proposed "clarification" without seeking to formally amend the treaty. The senator who most strongly declared his opinion was Paul Simon, Democrat of Illinois. "I am concerned that we are going to have no debate and that we are just going to bypass the A.B.M. treaty," he said at the May hearing. "And I think the message has to come from the Foreign Relations Committee . . . that we think if they proceed with this development, there has to be an amendment to the A.B.M. treaty. Now, frankly, I am going to vote against any such amendment, but I do not think that we should let this thing just slip by quietly without major attention to it."

During the May hearings, John B. Rhinelander, a Washington attorney, who had been the legal adviser to the delegation that negotiated the 1972 A.B.M. treaty, characterized THAAD as an "open-ended breach" of the treaty. The Administration's proposal, he added, would destroy the effectiveness of the treaty, thereby leaving Russia free to develop its own highly capable A.B.M. system, one that would undoubtedly include deployment of nuclear warheads on interceptors.

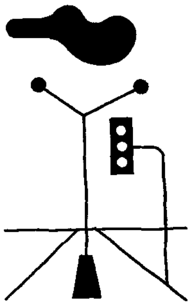
The result of going ahead with THAAD, Rhinelander and other arms-control experts agree, could be a Pentagon determination that the United States no longer has an assured capacity to destroy Russia, and such a determination could abort, or even reverse, the de-escalation of the arms race. Jack Mendelsohn, the deputy director of the Arms Control Association, who had a twenty-two-year government career, much of it dealing with strategic arms control, stated emphatically during an interview, "The real implication of this is not that it will destroy the A.B.M. treaty, which means nothing to most people, but that both sides will be inhibited from continuing deep cuts in *the strategic-arms stockpiles. It might even drive up the number of nuclear warheads."*

OTHERS in the arms-control community, eschewing political arguments, have concentrated on compiling and analyzing technical data on THAAD's performance. Ted Postol and George Lewis, his M.I.T. colleague, working with Lisbeth Gronlund and David Wright, of the Union of Concerned Scientists, published a seminal paper in April of this year scrutinizing the Administration's claim that THAAD would have no significant capability of intercepting ICBMs. Their analysis showed that a THAAD-like system capable of defending an area a hundred and fifty kilometres wide from missiles travelling at five kilometres a second would also be capable of defending a region seventy per cent as large—such as a major metropolitan area—from missiles travelling at seven kilometres a second. The team's findings were independently confirmed by the Congressional Budget Office—an action that left no doubt that THAAD's deployment would flagrantly violate the A.B.M. treaty.

No senior Pentagon official was willing to be interviewed for this article; various officials said, through spokesmen, that the issue was "too sensitive" right now.

In truth, as many Administration officials say in private, the Pentagon is determined not only to deploy THAAD without dealing with the A.B.M. treaty but also to continue to research more advanced missile-defense systems with an obvious potential for A.B.M.-treaty violations, including space-based sensors, sea-based missiles, and air-based missiles. In the military's view, none of this research should be cut off because of conflicts with the A.B.M. treaty.

The Pentagon's thinking was spelled out, in a defiant talk before a defense-industry group in March, by Ashton Carter, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy, who before joining the Clinton Administration had written widely on arms-control issues at Harvard. In the talk, Carter also linked the Patriot's performance in the Gulf War to the current plans for theatre missile defense. "It is our job to think ahead to what this nation's going to need ten years, twenty years from now, and make sure we have it," he said. "So when we go to war next time, even if these kinds of weapons are present, we can win as handily as we won in Desert Storm. That's our job. That's what you're paying two hundred and fifty billion dollars, or roundabout, a year to get. . . . Let me make just one point about THAAD and the A.B.M. treaty which has been an issue. . . . The A.B.M. treaty is not about theatre missile defense. . . . It has nothing to do with what we're trying to do in THAAD. . . . Therefore, it would have been a perfectly principled thing to do—and now I'm speaking my opinion—simply to go ahead with THAAD, and certify it as compliant with the A.B.M. treaty. We did not do that. We decided to take the extra step of going to our parties in the A.B.M. treaty and saying, 'Here is a system designed for this purpose. We'd like to describe it to you and get you to understand that this is not an A.B.M. system.' . . . But in any event we're going to go forward with THAAD because we need it and we have to have it. . . . These are our people in harm's way. They're our allies in harm's way. And I think we can do it. I think we can, so to speak, have our cake and eat it, too."



The Pentagon's position on THAAD deployment is heartily endorsed by the defense industry, by Republican members and staff people in Congress, and by conservative Washington think tanks such as the Center for Security Policy. In a recent interview, Richard Perle, who was one of the Reagan Administration's most articulate supporters of S.D.I., was scathing in his denunciation of the arms-control groups that are resisting THAAD. "Spurgeon Keeny is living on another planet," Perle said. "Who gives a shit about the A.B.M.? . . . The Cold War is over, and the doves are the last ones to know it. . . . The A.B.M. treaty is not worth the paper it's written on. . . . We could walk away from it—no way it could produce consequences. . . . The Russians are not going to start an offensive-missile-building program. And if they did, it'd make no difference." One of the most important defense issues of the era, Perle added, is this: "Can we develop a reasonably competent missile defense—both theatre and for the defense of the American continent—in the next thirty years? If Bill Clinton is so foolish as to hand the Republicans an issue, they'll beat him up on it."

THE Russians are another complication for the Administration. After a six-month review, President Clinton formally agreed late last year with the concept, advocated by many in the Pentagon, that the deployment of THAAD would not be a violation of the A.B.M. treaty, provided that it not be tested against ballistic missiles travelling above five kilometres a second. Robert Bell, of the National Security Council staff, was sent to Geneva last fall to negotiate with the Russians at a special meeting of the Standing Consultative Commission—the joint American-Soviet committee that was set up in 1972, after the signing of the A.B.M. treaty, to monitor compliance. The Russians drove a hard bargain. They agreed with Bell that the treaty could be "clarified"—without a formal amendment—to permit the deployment of a theatre missile-defense system. But, obviously fearful of the more advanced theatre missile-defense systems known to be sought by the Pentagon, they insisted that the speed of the interceptors be limited to three kilometres a second, or the deal was off.

The Pentagon's reported concern is that such a limit would preclude the development of more advanced air-based and sea-based missile-defense systems, and so make it more difficult to attack Scuds and other theatre ballistic missiles successfully at their most vulnerable point, which is shortly after launch. One American official acknowledged during an interview, approvingly, that if an Air Force fighter plane were to be equipped with a "big, fast missile" and linked to a space-based sensor it would be able to see and attack Scud or ICBM missiles as they were lifting off. "You've then got one heck of a Scud killer," the official said. The Russian goal at Geneva, he added, is to make sure that such a combination—missile-armed fighter planes and space sensors—does not get approved.

In a subsequent conversation, a Russian diplomat complained about the Pentagon's "aggressiveness" in the Geneva negotiations, and said his government would insist that modification—or clarification—of the A.B.M. treaty "must be done in a way that does not create a political debate." He went on, "Some people say the treaty is obsolete, but politically, philosophically, and militarily it plays a role in strengthening mutual confidence."

There were some in the White House who had initially hoped that an agreement on the deployment of theatre missile defenses could be announced at the Clinton-Yeltsin summit. But the issue of who could test what proved to be far more contentious than expected. In mid-June, the Joint Chiefs of Staff formally protested any compromise that would require the United States to limit the interceptor speed on THAAD and its planned air- and sea-based missile-defense systems. The Pentagon eventually backed off and agreed to accept the Russian demand for a three-kilometre-per-second limit on THAAD, on other ground-based interceptor missiles, and on the Navy's sea-based interceptor missiles. The Russians were asked to permit the United States to conduct six tests a year at higher interceptor speeds on its sea-based system. The Russians continued to resist, as expected, any deployment of higher-speed air-based or sea-based missile-defense systems. Another round of United States-Russian negotiations was set for early October in Geneva, officials said, with the Presidential summit perhaps constrained to a broad statement of support for theatre missile-defense systems.

Jack Mendelsohn, who is widely respected for his expertise, depicted the most recent Administration attempts to seek Russian approval for high-speed deployment of sea- and air-based systems as a "turkey," which stood little chance of being accepted by the Russians. "The White House is laying the foundation for total destruction of the A.B.M. treaty in the future," he said. "It's clear that THAAD is just the beginning. I think the Administration is making a historic mistake."

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Even if the Russians agree to most of the Administration's demands, there is still the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, which must be convinced that the Administration chose wisely in finding that THAAD, if left untested against a warhead travelling at more than five kilometres a second, could be approved without amending the A.B.M. treaty.

It's not known what the N.S.C.'s Robert Bell is telling John Deutch and others at the Pentagon, but his private warnings to the arms-control community have caused distress. According to Mendelsohn, another senior Administration official had told a meeting that "the Republicans had their defensive system—S.D.I.—and the Democrats have to have theirs or they'll be killed politically." Mendelsohn said he was skeptical about the outcome of the missile debate, because "guys like John Deutch are so tough to deal with on this, and the President is not going to stand up on a defense issue."

But Postol isn't done yet. He believes that the Administration, with its talk of "clarification," has deliberately sought to deceive the Senate—and the people. Any doubts, if he had any, he said, were washed away by the Administration's compromise proposals this summer in Geneva seeking Russian approval for the testing and deployment of high-speed interceptors. "I cannot imagine how anyone could claim that these proposed changes would not result in systems that have strategic capabilities," Postol told me. He and his colleagues plan to take the fight to the Senate. "If the Senate wants to abandon the A.B.M., that's its prerogative. But it's my intention to make sure the Senate understands what it's doing. The fact is that the treaty would effectively be eliminated."

Ultimately, the missile buck will stop with Bill Clinton, who must decide whether he wants a showdown with the Russians, or with the Pentagon leadership and the defense industry, or with his fellow-Democrats in the arms-control community and in Congress. He can't please one group without enraging the others. ♦

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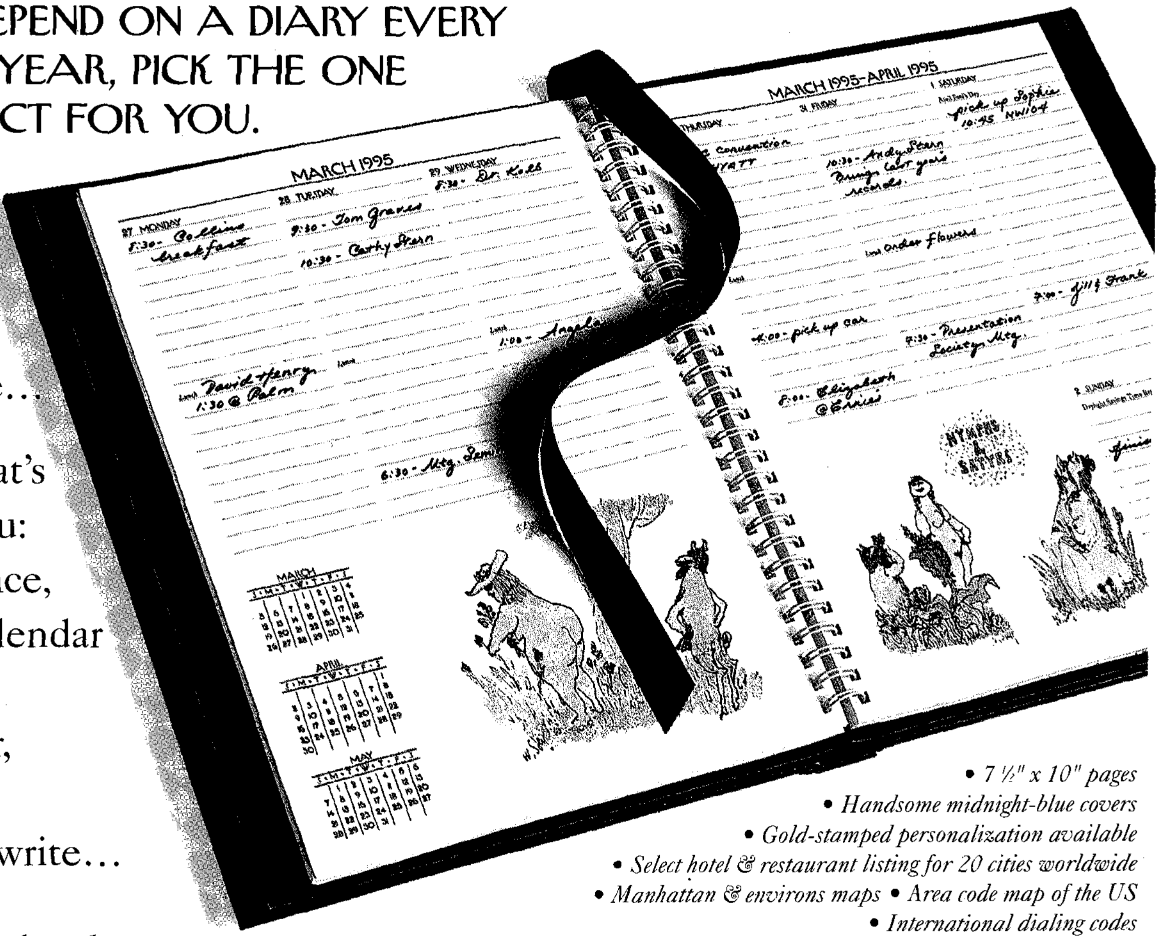
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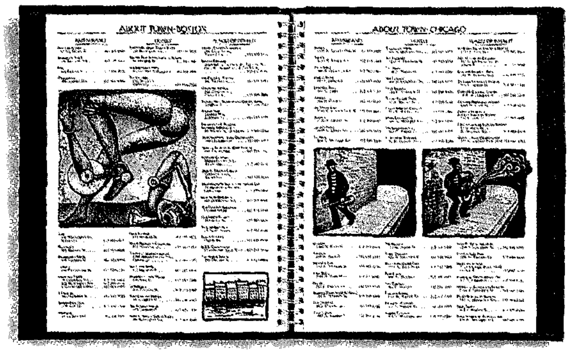
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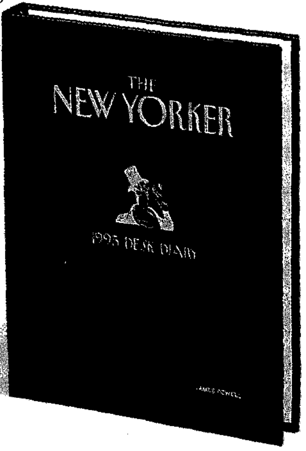
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THE CRITICS

BOOKS

LOOSE CANON

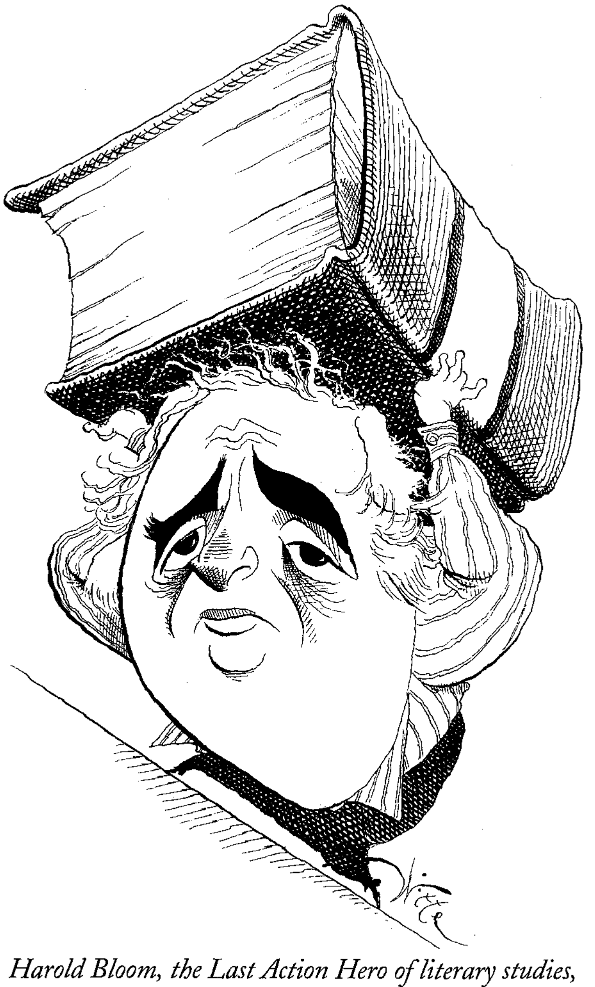
BY CHARLES McGRATH

The Western Canon
By Harold Bloom
(Harcourt, Brace; $29.95)

I HAVE mercifully repressed most of my Yale Graduate School years, back in the early seventies, but I'm pretty sure that I never once heard the word "canon." In those days, we knew beyond a doubt what the important books were—if we didn't, we were told—and in Harold Bloom's class it wasn't enough just to read them; we *anguished* over them, picking away at all the intricate knots left by the cunning authors. Or, rather, Bloom anguished, cupping his Zero Mostel-like head in his hands, screwing his shaggy eyebrows into little circumflexes, while we "ephebes," as he called us, looked on in dazed exhaustion. For Bloom, mere reading was almost beside the point, since he had already committed much of Western literature to memory. He was then still in the throes of formulating his famous theory of poetic "influence"—that patricidal wrestling match in which "strong" writers (and strong readers, for that matter) attempt to throw off the crippling burden imposed by their even stronger forebears, or "precursors"—and he would sometimes visibly sag under the weightiness of his task: the great head would sink tableward while he murmured about the "darkness" and the "difficulty" of whatever passage he happened to be considering. There were days when clouds of gloom seemed to gather at his end of the seminar room.

MICHAEL WHITE

As it turned out, I was a "weak" reader, and eventually Bloom's influence—his sense of literature as a psychic battlefield of evasion and anxiety—proved too much for me, and I became a dropout. I still owe Bloom a paper on Wallace Stevens' "Harmonium," and from time to time I actually think about taking out my notes and making a fresh start, but then the old paralysis descends on me yet again. For years, whenever I was on a train that stopped in New Haven I would sink a little lower in my seat and guiltily arrange a newspaper over my head.



Harold Bloom, the Last Action Hero of literary studies, believes that reading is an act of "unpleasure."

If I had been less self-absorbed, I might have discovered that the prof was having academic troubles of his own. In 1976, after a decade of loose alliance with Yale's deconstructionist and European-influenced critics (Geoffrey Hartman, Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, et al.), Bloom broke away from the federation and, in effect, formed an English Department of one; later, as if to further signal his disapproval of the kind of thinking and writing that were going on at Yale, he began teaching half-time at N.Y.U. He was fed up, he says now, with the "Balkanization of literary studies," not just at Yale but at English Departments everywhere, and with what he calls the School of Resentment—by which he means feminists, socialists, Lacanians, the New Historicists, deconstructionists, semioticians, multiculturalists, and just about everybody else who believes that literary study is or ought to be influenced by some non-literary agenda. Bloom claims that his own allegiance these days is to the Marxist school of criti-

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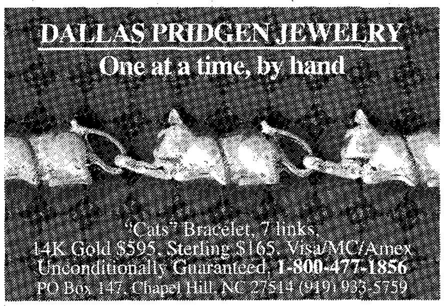
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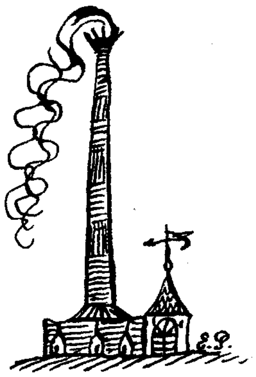
cism—the Groucho Marxist school, that is, whose motto is "Whatever it is, I'm against it."

To disseminate his views, in 1983 Bloom, always a prolific academic writer, undertook a titanic—not to say megalomaniacal—publishing task: the supervising, editing, and writing of introductions for a series of Chelsea House critical editions and commentaries originally projected at some seven hundred and fifty volumes. In the midst of these labors, he also managed to write five books, including "The Book of J"—in which he propounds his theory that the Hebrew God is essentially a literary character, probably created by a female writer in King Solomon's court—and a volume on gnosticism in American religion. And at last, to accompanying fanfares from *Esquire* and *New York* and some other journals not usually found on the English Department subscription list, he is bringing out "The Western Canon," a five-hundred-and-seventy-eight-page attempt to settle once and for all the much debated question of which books constitute the core of Western literature and are thus the proper object of serious literary study.

Harcourt, which has printed an initial seventy-five thousand copies of "The Western Canon," contracted for the book back in 1992, on the heels of "The Closing of the American Mind," the surprise best-seller by Allan Bloom (no relation). Presumably, the publishers were hoping for a similarly magisterial coffee-table defense of Western culture and civilization. What they got is something much more eccentric—an impassioned defense of Harold Bloom's particular way of reading the classics. "The Western Canon" is as dismissive of the right as it is of the left. Literary study, Bloom is quick to proclaim, has no redeeming social value. "Whatever the Western Canon is," he says, "it is not a program of social salvation," and he adds that reading will not necessarily improve the individual, either. In the Bloomian scheme of things, reading is ultimately an act of "unpleasure"—an arduous, solitary struggle whose final form is a confrontation with one's mortality. As it happens, Bloom's own book imposes a burden of additional unpleasures. Like its author, it is by turns formidable, charming, brilliant, long-winded, digressive, and tediously single-minded. In theory, it is addressed to the Common Reader, but it presupposes a fair degree of familiarity with the canon of Bloom's own works—or, at least, with his highly personal vocabulary and doctrines.



Perhaps to perk up this dense and off-putting package, Bloom's agent and his editors prevailed upon him to append an additional (and already notorious) list of some eight hundred and fifty writers whom Bloom has nominated as the most significant in Western literature, or as his best bets to join that select group in the "chaotic age" that he sees crashing down around us. No one's going to quarrel with Aeschylus, Sophocles, etc. It's Bloom's arbitrary-seeming collection of more or less contemporary works that has stirred up all the controversy. It includes Kenneth Koch but not Sylvia Plath. Tony Kushner but not John Guare. And Zora Neale Hurston but not Alice Walker. (*Especially* not Alice Walker, who in the text gets slammed more than once as an example of the kind of writer overvalued by the "academic lemmings," as Bloom calls them.) Almost all of Roth makes the cut but only one novel by Updike ("The Witches of Eastwick"). Just two books by Nabokov but four by Walter Abish. O'Hara but not Thurber. J. P. Marquand but not V. S. Pritchett. And so on and so on. It's hard to tell whether the choices are the product of fine discrimination or simply the result of an hour or so of shelf-gazing. A few of Bloom's picks are clearly examples of favoritism or logrolling. For instance, the section devoted to British and Irish authors includes, on the same page as Auden, Larkin, and Lessing, two books by the historian Jonathan Spence, a well-known academic writer, who also happens to be a Yale colleague and friend of Bloom's; and Tony Kushner's premature election seems a little less inexplicable, perhaps, if one knows that Kushner is a big fan of Bloom's, and that the afterword to "Perestroika" refers, quakingly, to Bloom as a "primal father." Other choices, as far as I can make out, are there as performances in one-upmanship or to demonstrate what hardly needs demonstrating—that Bloom has read more books than any other man alive. I'll take his word that Mahmoud Darwish and Taha Husayn are, along with Naguib Mahfouz, the standouts in contemporary Arabic writing, and that Ivo Andrić's "The Bridge on the Drina" is a landmark of Serbo-Croatian lit. But who on earth is Ellen Glasgow, two of whose books make the short list of American classics, and has anybody but Bloom enjoyed her "Vein of Iron" lately? In the end, Bloom's list, for all its peculiarities, is so wide-ranging and scattershot—so obviously an exercise in bet-hedging—as to be of little practical use. It's essentially a literary publicity stunt. Despite the Alice Walker exclusion—or maybe because of it—the list is almost politically correct enough to pass muster in any department of Women's Studies or of African-American Lit. In other words, it's completely at odds with the actual text of "The Western Canon," where the field of contenders is much narrower and the bar has been set considerably higher. The only contemporary Americans whom Bloom really sees as legitimate candidates for future canonization, it turns out, are Merrill, Ashbery, and—remember him?—Thomas Pynchon.

BLOOM'S true heavyweights—the twenty-six authors to whom the bulk of "The Western Canon" is devoted—are, with a few exceptions, the standard Dead White European Males: Shakespeare, Dante, Chaucer, Cervantes, Montaigne, Molière, Milton, Johnson, Goethe, Wordsworth, Austen, Whitman, Dickinson, Dickens, George Eliot, Tolstoy, Ibsen, Freud, Proust, Joyce, Woolf, Kafka, Borges, Neruda, Pessoa, and Beckett. It's a predictable bunch—the kind of lineup that in the old days would have made a tidy two-semester survey course. (Most of these authors have already been outlined and summarized by Cliffs Notes—those convenient trots which are, or used to be, one of the truest indicators of classroom canonicity.) But, if the writers themselves are unsurprising, Bloom's reasons for singling them out are not the old lecture-hall blandishments (moral

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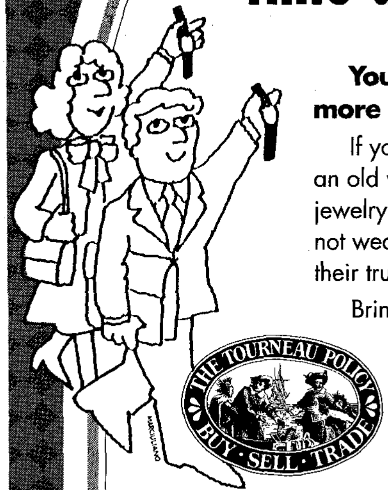

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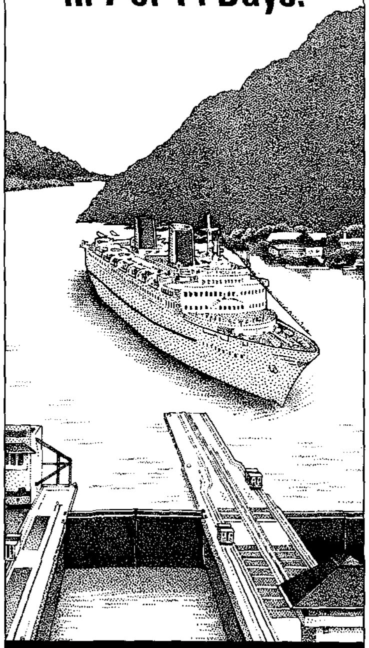

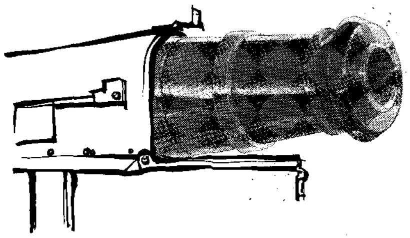

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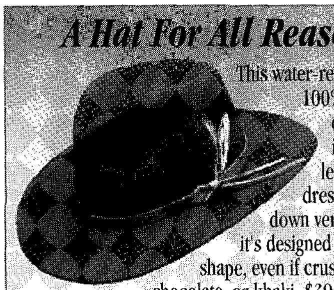

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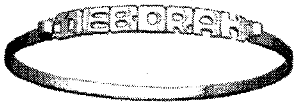

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clarity, linguistic beauty, faithfulness of representation), and his version of the canon turns out to be much narrower than the one usually taught in Western Civ. 201.

In Bloom's view, what constitutes literary greatness is not a work's cultural authority—the degree to which it sums up or represents its writer or its moment—but, rather, its *strangeness*, the degree to which it is unlike anything that came before it. Or, to put it another way, the canon is the scorecard in the great game of literary influence: a record of the winners in the eternal struggle to escape from the oppressive examples of the past. Accordingly, the individual essays in "The Western Canon" are for the most part not overviews or general interpretations of the authors in question but something resembling old-fashioned "appreciations": chapter-length bursts of praise, spelling out and then applauding the ways these mighty authors have outwitted their precursors and, in many instances, their present-day interpreters. These essays are all immensely learned, and are animated by an uncompromising conviction that aesthetic values *matter*. Some of the chapters are highly technical—the discussion of Emily Dickinson, for example—while others, like the chapter on Montaigne, are fond anthologies of Bloom's favorite passages. Ever the weak (or distractable) reader, I sometimes found myself skimming some of the more abstruse sections and lingering over those lines in which Bloom reveals something about himself: that he never reads "Bleak House" without weeping; that his favorite movie is W. C. Fields' "Fatal Glass of Beer"; and that once, when he found himself "in crisis" on Nantucket, he got over it by reciting Whitman to himself.

I doubt if much of "The Western Canon" will come as news to serious students of Bloom's earlier work, but the process of influence as it's described here is considerably more benign than it was in some of Bloom's earlier formulations—less devious and tortured, less fraught with Oedipal anxiety. What is news, or was to me, is the way that Freud, who was once the key to a correct understanding of influence—its founding father, so to speak—has apparently been readjusted in Bloom's pantheon. That Freud makes the select group of twenty-six literary stars is the book's biggest surprise, and perhaps its most original insight: forget about Freud as a scientist or as a therapist, Bloom says, and consider him just as an essayist—one even more radical and influential than Emerson. But Bloom's chapter on Freud also has a subtext, and suggests that the real reason for his inclusion here is so that he, too, can be exposed as a loser in the influence struggle. According to Bloom, Freud's true precursor—his hidden authority, the spiritual father he was unable to come to terms with—was not Breuer or Charcot but none other than William Shakespeare, who, we learn, was the inventor of psychoanalysis. Freud's contribution, it turns out, was simply to prosify the discoveries that the Bard had already set forth in verse drama—or, rather, to prosify and then misrepresent them. How does Bloom know this? Easy. Because Freud almost never talks about Shakespeare except to belittle him. In the darker reaches of influence, Bloom always used to insist, it's the unspoken and unacknowledged debts that loom largest. The so-called Oedipus complex, he argues, is actually a Hamlet complex—based on a misreading of the play and then displaced onto Sophocles. "The anxiety of influence has no more distinguished sufferer in our time," Bloom writes, "than the founder of psychoanalysis, who always discovered that Shakespeare had been there before him, and all too frequently could not bear to confront this humiliating truth."

The hypervaluation of Shakespeare is the other surprise embedded in "The Western Canon." Not only did the Bard invent the psyche but he is, to all intents and purposes, a one-man canon: the true original, the writer to whom all others owe everything and to whom they refer constantly. "Greatness in the West's literature centers on Shakespeare, who has become the touchstone for all who come before and after him, be they dramatists, lyric poets, or storytellers," Bloom writes. "He had no true precursor in the creation of character . . . and has left no one after him untouched."

The centrality of Shakespeare is hardly an original notion, of course. What's striking is the fervor with which Bloom, who has been known mostly for his work on Romantic and post-Romantic poets, recites his case, and the lengths to which he goes to prove it, ferreting out allusions in the most unlikely places. "Coming to Shakespeare after writing about Romantic and modern poets and after meditating on the issues of influence and originality," he says, "I experienced the shock of difference, the difference in kind as well as in degree, that is uniquely Shakespeare's." And, just as striking, when Bloom attempts to explain that difference he resorts to a somewhat retro critical framework. He even indulges in the practice—anathema at the formalist Yale of my day—of talking about Hamlet and Lear and Macbeth as if they were real people. Shakespeare's magnificence, he says, comes not from his command of language or of imagery but from his "abundant sense of reality" and his "power of representation of human character and personality." As an example of Shakespeare's supreme achievement, he cites Falstaff—or Sir John, as he's usually referred to here (Bloom has a Tory-like respect for knighthood, and rarely fails to use the full monikers of two titled practitioners of his own trade: Sir Frank Kermode and Sir William Empson)—saying that that worthy knight is "so original and so overwhelming that with him Shakespeare changes the entire meaning of what it is to have created a man made out of words."

Nothing earthshaking about this, either, except that in the current critical climate it sounds practically premodern—closer to Hazlitt, say, than to anything in the latest issue of the *PMLA*. The whole Shakespeare chapter is suffused with a rhapsodic, slightly antique quality, until by the end it seems that, perhaps for the first time in his career, Bloom is almost at a loss for words, or for notions. Partly, it's a case of ecstatic admiration, and partly, one can't help feeling, it's that Bloom, beleaguered by his own influences and unable to turn off that flood of remembered text scrolling endlessly through his brain, doesn't quite know what to make of a writer who has no anxieties—who exists in an almost pure relation not to other authors but simply to the world.

WHO are Bloom's precursors, I used to wonder back there in the seminar room. Whose mantle is he trying both to escape and to claim? There was Freud, naturally, and possi-

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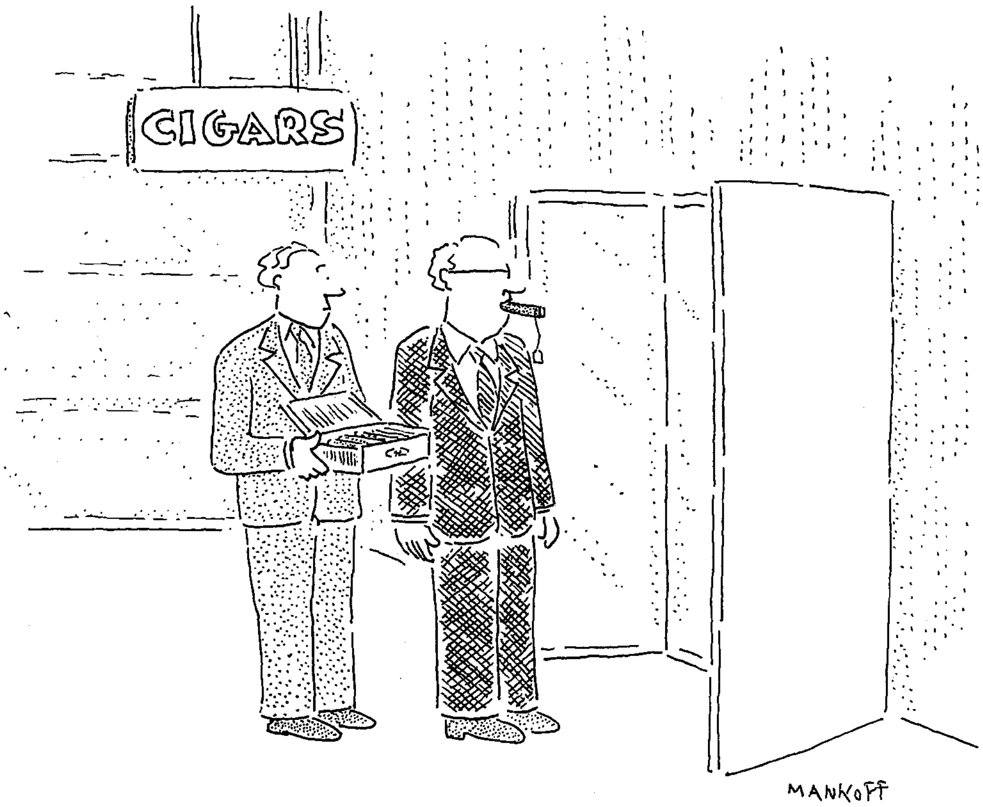

bly Emerson—except that they were too obvious. He invoked them constantly, and the *really* strong influences, remember, are the ones you can't bring yourself to name. (It has to be said, though, that the chapter on Freud has all the earmarks of a "clinamen"—the creative "swerve" that Bloom used to claim was one of the overinfluenced writer's last resorts when it came to dodging the shadow of a powerful forebear.) For a while, I thought that the hidden mentor might be Northrop Frye, the author of "Anatomy of Criticism": that would account for Bloom's love of systems (the structure of "The Western Canon" is based on Giambattista Vico's theory of cyclic ages) and of arcane vocabulary (his "clinamens" and "kenosises" and "tesserae"). I also considered the great scholar of the Cabala Gershom Scholem, but that was based mostly on hearsay, since I had never actually read any Scholem. The real source of Bloom's anxiety, I now believe, was all the time much closer to hand, and I guessed it long before I got to Chapter 8 of "The Western Canon"—the one entitled "Dr. Samuel Johnson, the Canonical Critic." Bloom's true precursor is none other than the Great Cham himself, the father of English criticism.

Of course, Bloom is nowhere near the writer Johnson was, but otherwise the parallels are arresting, and manifest themselves in a surprising number of ways. In Bloom's famous melancholy, for example. In his eighteenth-century habit of addressing everybody, man and woman alike, as "my dear." In his prodigious output. (What is the Chelsea House critical series but "The Lives of the Poets" writ large?) Above all, in Bloom's passion for the written word, his contempt for cant (other people's cant, anyway), and his conviction that reading is the only avenue to personal wisdom. For all its grandiosity and occasional wackiness, "The Western Canon" approaches its subject with a Johnsonian seriousness and largeness of spirit.

Like Johnson, Bloom loves books, loves them for themselves. It's this, more than anything else, that distinguishes him from so many of the School of Resentment: he loves books so much that he even reads *theirs*. Bloom also broods, just as Johnson did, about the decline of learning, the fall from greatness. Besides the endless permutations of influence, the other big theme in Bloom's book is his lament over the increasing marginality of literature in our society: though he never quite comes out and says so, his Western Canon is, with just a few exceptions, a canon of the now largely unread.

Bloom tends to blame the academy for this, but that seems an oversimplification. It's only because of the academy that some of his writers are still paid any attention at all. Who nowadays would know about Montaigne, say, if he hadn't been on the syllabus? And some of the very schools of lit crit which Bloom excoriates are in fact motivated by a wish, however feeble or self-serving, to render the classics "relevant" again. Bloom's analysis discounts, or even ignores, the role of the cultural marketplace in the process of canon formation—the way that Hardy's poetry was scarcely read fifty years ago, while in some graduate programs today it's as celebrated as the novels. Or, to take two of Bloom's stars, the way that Borges and Neruda suddenly burst upon the North American consciousness in the late sixties, along with all the rest of Latin-American literature.

In any event, it's hard to imagine that Bloom's argument, with its emphasis on difficulty—on reading and writing as a perpetual struggle—is going to turn the tide. And his efforts at resuscitating certain writers are less than persuasive. (His chapter on Ibsen's "Peer Gynt" does nothing to make one want to encounter that old warhorse again.) To a large extent, in fact, Bloom may be shouting into the void. In his perpetual state of passionate engagement, he doesn't fully accept that in the age of chaos he is part of a dying breed—a sort of Last Action Hero of literary studies. The great irony is that "The Western Canon" itself may contribute to the very state of affairs Bloom so fiercely deplores. By tacking on that handy, media-friendly list—by resorting to the quintessential soundbite genre—Bloom has probably condemned his own book to the sad and inexorable canonical fate. You can talk about it endlessly without reading a single word. ♦

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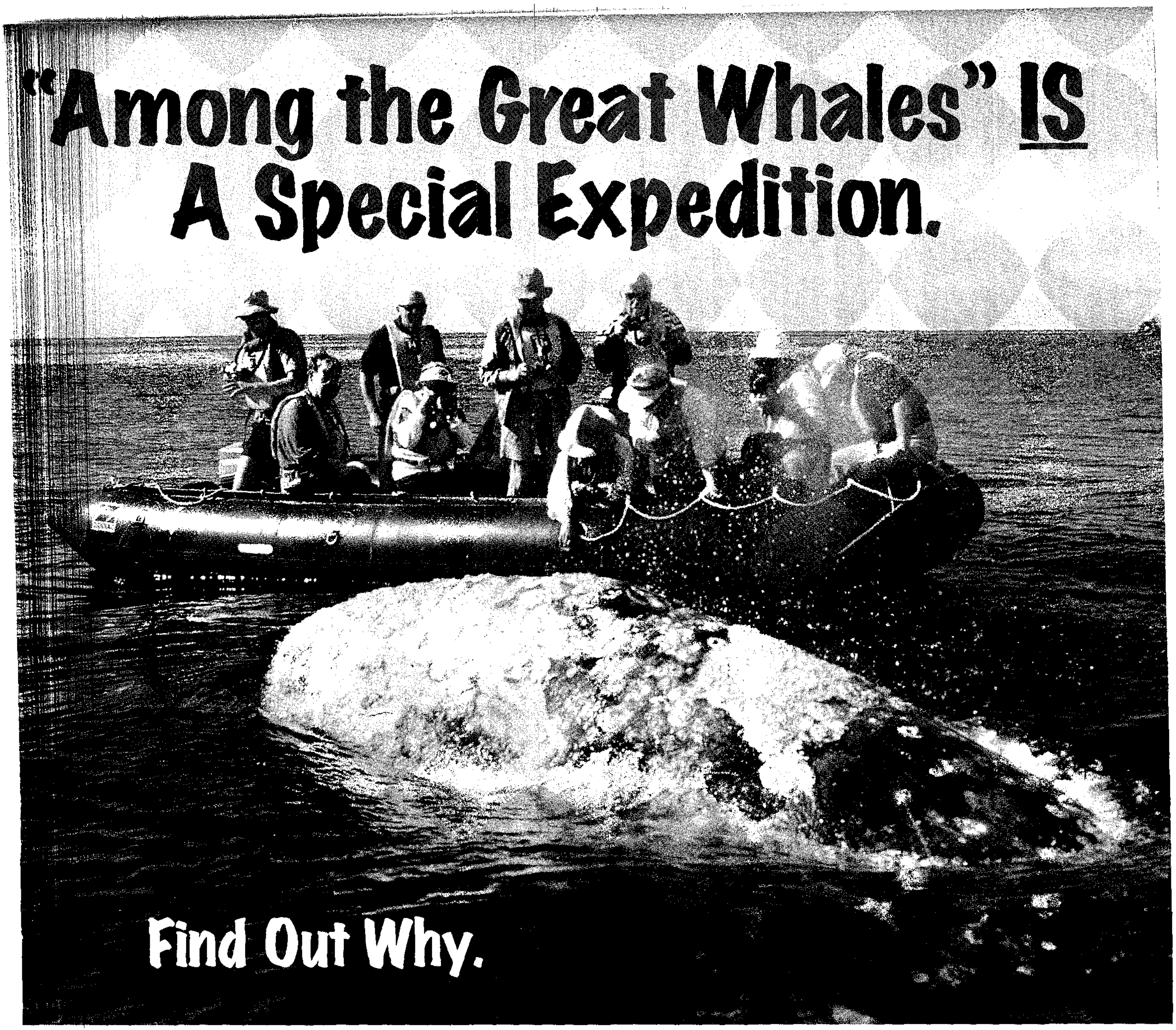

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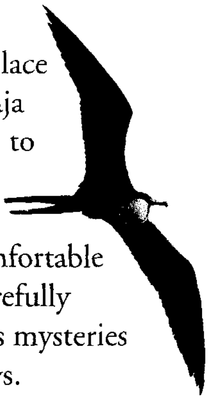

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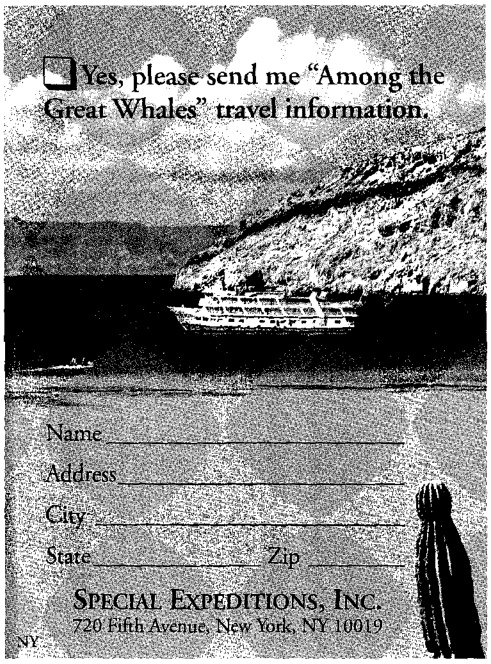

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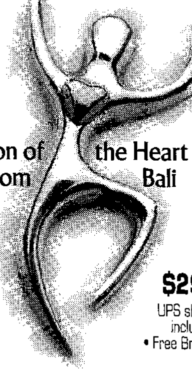

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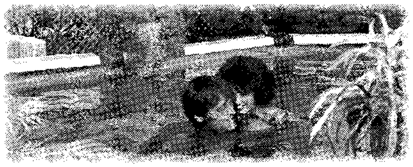

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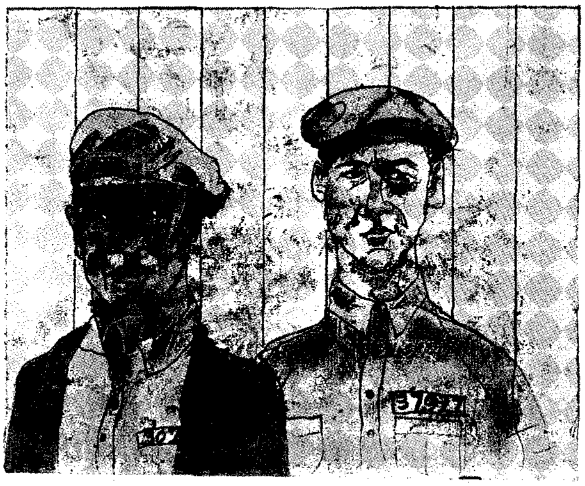
IN THE BIG HOUSE

BY ANTHONY LANE

"THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION" is a terrible title for a fine movie. It sounds like minor Robert Ludlum, one of those cuboid thrillers that start at the U.N. and end on a rock face. In fact, almost the whole picture takes place in jail—a monolithic dump called Shawshank, so soured by malevolence that old hands like to lay bets on the mental frailty of newcomers, wondering which of them will snap first. One of the more resilient is Andy Dufresne (Tim Robbins), an upstanding young banker sent to Shawshank in 1947 for the murder of his wife and her golf-pro lover. We never see the deed itself, but it seems like a pretty clear case; the movie zips from crime scene to courtroom with a speed that outstrips any lingering doubt, and has Andy nicely shut up in Shawshank before the credits have grown cold.



Morgan Freeman and Tim Robbins in "The Shawshank Redemption," a prison movie that's an exercise in careful, comic stoicism.

Frank Darabont, the writer and director, draws any number of strong performances from his cast but insures that the true star of the film is the prison. It comes across not as a place of confinement, still less one of justice, but as the natural habitat of darkness, a big box of shadows into which men are occasionally tossed. At the bars of their cells, they glimmer into view and out again, content to hold their peace—or, at least, their unvarying distress—as though a long sentence were just an extended version of the death sentence, and had turned them into ghosts before their time. The presiding warden is Norton (Bob Gunton)—a trim, demonic chunk of a man, who begins the movie in a mood of Biblical severity, stepping out of the gloom to address the latest inmates. "Rule Number One: No blasphemy," he declares. Firm yet fair, you think; but as the plot proceeds, the gloom will gather him in, creep into his blood, and corrupt him with the thrill of power. By the end, in the most alarming touch of all, he becomes a dead ringer for Henry Kissinger.

Given these surroundings, it would have been easy to make a thoroughly miserable movie, or a merely brutal one. But when Andy is beaten up, the camera withdraws to a respectful distance, averting its gaze but leaving us with the sound of bone against flesh, which is bad enough. "The Shawshank Redemption" is the precise opposite of an Oliver Stone production—an exercise in careful, comic stoicism. Andy makes friends with the prison fixer, a gentle killer named Red (Morgan Freeman), just the man to smuggle in a hammer or sell cigarettes, and wry enough to understand that an offer of parole is about as likely as a gift of wings. A decade later, Andy even buys him a "parole-rejection present," a harmonica. At this point, I tensed in nervous anticipation: harmonicas are one of the great warning signs of sentimentality in American cinema, right up there with sunsets and lost dogs. But Darabont plays it cool: he shows Red putting the instrument to his lips and breathing a chord, then fades out fast, before wistfulness sets in. He takes his cue, in other words, from Freeman, an actor so dignified that he wouldn't melt if the camera were breathing flame.

The film settles into a kind of loping, pensive pace: never boring, but alert to the tiny ruptures of habit that pass for excitement in a prison routine, and sufficiently relaxed to wander off and spend time with any secondary characters who come into view. So Robbins and Freeman stand back as the stage is taken for a while by Brooks (James Whitmore), a crumpled con unable to cope with freedom after decades behind bars, and by Tommy (Gil Bellows), a young good-for-nothing with an Elvis posture, who is persuaded by Andy that he could be good for anything. This sounds a bit therapeutic, and there are moments when Darabont tries to persuade us that human togetherness is just around the corner—if only we could reach out, listen in, and so on. Somebody has to save the movie, to turn away from this high flush of innocence, and the task falls to Tim Robbins; in the dead gaze of Andy Dufresne, he gives us an engrossing portrait of a man performing a post mortem on his own illusions—"I'm a convicted murderer who provides sound financial planning." Andy's friendship is hard to win, and even harder to lose, but you know that, in the last resort, he could live without you; the chief advantage of prison is not the togetherness—which, being compulsory, is hardly worth the name—but the chance to discover exactly what can be achieved by solitude. I will not give the plot away; suffice it to say that a movie that seemed to have no plot whatsoever turns out to have been stitched as neatly as a sampler, and all within the cell of one man's mind.

"The Shawshank Redemption" is great news for Tim Robbins, freeing him to move on from the disappointment of "The Hudsucker Proxy." He gave that picture everything he had, but only proved that what he had wasn't right for the job. If he belongs in screwball, it is not as a cheery chump but as an amused Machiavel, or a brainy professor type who needs yanking down to earth. The Coen brothers were fighting a losing battle from the moment they cast him against the grain of his intelligence. In the last few years, since Robbins made his name in "Bull Durham" and "Jacob's Ladder," something has deepened in his screen character; he has grown sly instead of shy, and more easily pained. The face is fuller, as if swollen from a recent blow, yet still boyish enough to make you see why violence—born of envy or, as in "The Shawshank Redemption," of cloistered lust—should come his way. The movie finds new uses for his height, too; where Robert Altman, in "The Player," dressed him in long, low-slung suits, stretching him out into a sleek corporate mantis, Darabont finds something ungainly in his frame, a stiffness all too ready to hunch into a stoop. It isn't just that Andy ages almost twenty years in the course of the narrative but that right from the start he seems well acquainted with strain, with time's talent for wrinkling and softening the soul.

He survives, however, and has both the wit and the reticence not to look triumphant about it. When Andy returns from a spell in solitary, he looks as collected, if not as cool, as Steve McQueen trudging back from a similar stretch in "The Great Escape." Entering his cell, and seeing that Red has, as requested, delivered a poster of Rita Hayworth, he permits himself a short, satisfied smile, but no more than that; the last laugh is still years away. As Rita yields to Marilyn, and Marilyn to Raquel Welch, Andy is inspired by his patron goddesses in ways that we don't quite understand. To its credit, the film refuses to dabble in the cheap, glamorous cant of "Kiss of the Spider Woman," which had the gall to suggest that a full dose of imagination, steeped in old movies, is enough to dissolve all physical constraints and set the mind soaring. Like hell it is. When the men of Shawshank roar their delight at Rita's bare shoulders during a screening of "Gilda"—like the inmates of "Sullivan's Travels" laughing at cartoons—we are looking at interludes, not escapes. There's only one route to liberty, and you need to start digging now.

It isn't difficult, nevertheless, for prison movies to brim with spiritual suggestion; the idea of springing from a cage, or even the dream of being sprung, slots all too easily into our inherited notions of transcendence, of the soul that slips its bodily chains. The trick is not to push the point; think of Robert Bresson's 1956 film "A Man Escaped," the tightest of the genre, which addresses its narrative task with the same single-minded economy that is displayed by its hero, a member of the French Resistance, as he plans to flee his Nazi captors. On a first viewing, I thought it was the greatest movie I had ever seen—even better than "Top Hat," though perhaps not quite as dressy—and time has done nothing to change my

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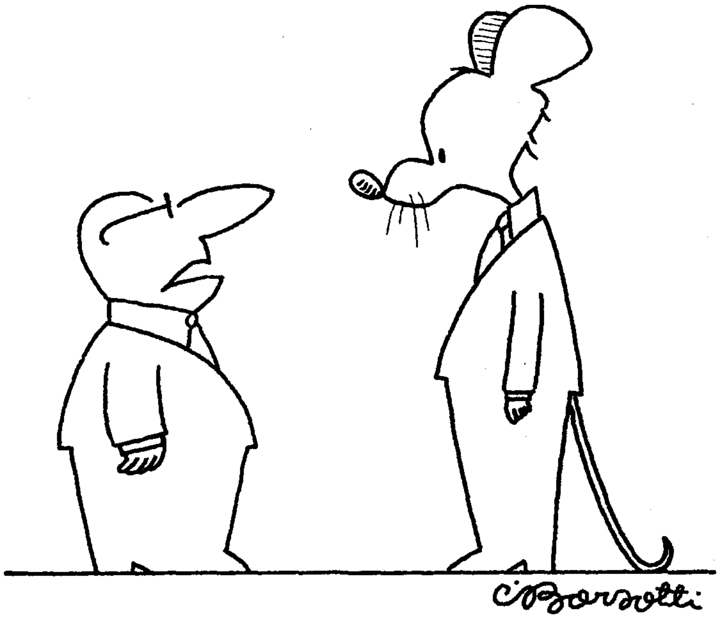
mind. There are scenes in it that pull your nerves as fiercely as anything in Hitchcock, but they resolve themselves into an exultation wholly alien to him; watching the film unfold is like riding a roller coaster down the nave of a cathedral. At no point does it announce its allegorical implications, and at no point can we ignore them. "The Shawshank Redemption" delivers its own uplift, but, unlike "A Man Escaped," it can't resist the temptation to tell us that it is doing so, stumbling badly as the characters start to neglect the practical duties of their existence in favor of hefting its symbolic weight. "There are places in the world which aren't made out of stone," says Andy, which is hardly news. "There are places inside they can't get to, that they can't touch." That sounds hopeful, if a little surgical, but it slows the movie down; Darabont should have handed his work back to the editor for one last trim, to get rid of those fine, flabby speeches which he couldn't bear to lose.

Taking a casual poll, I found that by general consensus the trailer for "The Shawshank Redemption" is so far the worst of the year. This is unusual; the majority of the trailers these days are much *better* than the movies they were designed to trumpet—a perfect excuse, in fact, for not going to see the movies at all. In this case, it looks as if the trailer-makers inspected the film's pedigree, saw that Darabont's screenplay was adapted from a short novel by Stephen King, and decided to sell the result as a piece of spooky hokum. But the King story comes from the same collection that gave us "Stand by Me," which marks it out as a zombie-free zone, and Darabont duly revels in the chance to work on our senses without dragging in the paraphernalia of horror. The movie is even smarter than that, however; having flirted with our capacity for wonder, it keeps both feet firmly on the ground. You can hardly blame it for lacking the moral astringency, and the formal beauty, of a Bresson movie; this is modern Hollywood, after all, where redemption means a hug at the end of "Home Alone," and by that standard Darabont has done an honorable job. His film is too long, but it feels sturdy and stirring—there's an old-fashioned decency in the way that it exerts, and increases, its claim upon our feelings. It offers the prospect of men determined to tend their virtues, or tangled up in vice; it has tough dramatic roots, in other words, and it grows on you. When I saw "The Shawshank Redemption" in a full theatre, surrounded by real people rather than critics, I felt the movie working—all the sympathies and forebodings clicking into gear at the right time. You might say that this happens with "Forrest Gump," too, but there's a big difference: "Gump" is a cheat. It doesn't earn your emotions but screws them out of you, and, in return, offers you a Lethean draught of forgetfulness. It suggests that mercy and goodness are just floating around freely, like balloons, waiting to be grabbed by anyone who happens to be passing. If that is what people want from the movies, then heaven help "The Shawshank Redemption." ♦



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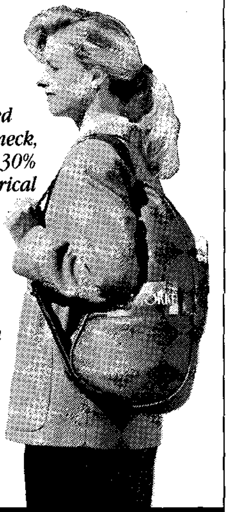

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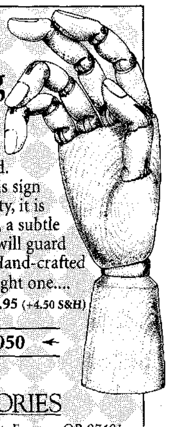

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MUSICAL EVENTS

MORE DANGEROUS LIAISONS

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

LETTER NO. 70,156
The Marquise de Merteuil to the
Vicomte de Valmont

One alters the tedium with letters—with letters and with outings. I was at the Opera the other evening. (Someday, perhaps, I will tell you with whom.) Despite the fact that the performance—I mean the performance onstage—was excellent, what chiefly attracted my interest was the intrigue, since this purported to present a story with which you and I, my dear Vicomte, are somewhat familiar. I need hardly say more than that the piece was entitled "The Dangerous Liaisons," and that the libretto was an adaptation, by a certain Monsieur Philip Littell, of that book of our correspondence which was published to such gratifyingly scandalous effect by the Capitaine-Commandant Choderlos de Laclos. I did not note the composer.[1]

DANIEL MAJA

To see ourselves singing upon the public stage might have been a cause for some merriment. However, that was not to be. I cannot tell you how little the Merteuil of the opera resembled myself—leaving aside all question of her clothes. Of course, one cannot avoid the comparison with the cinematic version, in which I was personified with such bewitching subtlety that I almost felt myself to be living there in flickering light on the screen, and not in my seat. Never was there any question of that in the case of the opera, for reasons that have to do, I believe, principally with the language offered in the libretto. We live through our words. We are our words. I have always thought it a great virtue of the epistolary form that the reader is apprised of one solely by means of one's own words, and I feel sure that here is a principal reason for the success of Monsieur de Laclos's book, in which we come into being through what we utter on paper, and in which the participation of the compiler is restricted to the occasional, merely efficient footnote.[2] As I say, we are our words. But am I to concede that I am this: "He usually doesn't drop in here so often"? How could I say such a thing? How could I sing such a thing? It is not the anachronism to which I object, nor yet the misplaced adverb, but, rather, the inelegance to which both contribute—and not so much the inelegance for its own sake as for what it bespeaks of an absence of style. Without style there can be no irony; without irony there can be no Merteuil. There are, it is true, in the libretto instances in which the words are more knowingly fashioned: I refer to the sudden outbreaks of rhyme. But these have no rhythm or finesse. I—if it is indeed I who speak in this libretto—hurtle from the drab to the witless: "Her intended will not find a maid/His insult to me will be repaid."

This is poor substitute for the intricacy of the letters through which our history originally came before the public—and no substitute at all for the intimacy our readers must feel as they finger what was private and read us in words we intended for other and quite particular recipients. Film can offer that illicit intimacy in another way. We can linger on faces and features as otherwise only lovers can. The image soaks up our gaze without embarrassment and asks for more. And we give it. But at the Opera the other

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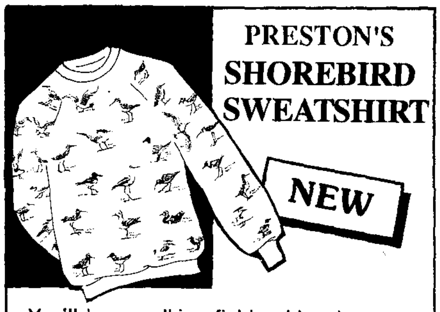
[1] The name that eludes the Marquise must be that of Conrad Susa, whose opera on this subject had its first performance on September 10, 1994, in San Francisco.

[2] The Marquise surely underestimates the author of these footnotes.



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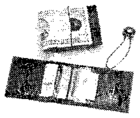

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night, with the singers far away and their words as I have said, it seemed to me that all the lustre of these episodes was lost: here were shadows singing to us of matters that had nothing to do with them.

In the foyer, as I was going out, I chanced upon the pretty little Danceny. (Delicious the rumors about quite how, and quite where, he was stilettoed in Malta.) Since he seemed in a hurry, I asked that he would write me his opinion of the music. I enclose his letter for your perusal.

I finish without the usual appendages of date and place. Death has among its solaces the redundancy of the calendar, and, as for my address, you know where to find me.

LETTER NO. 70,157

The Chevalier Danceny to the Marquise de Merteuil

MADAME, I hasten to accede to your request but must first apologize for my abrupt behavior last evening. The truth is that I was overcome with shame, yet again, at the rehearsal of these long-past events, and still more so with anger that the music had displayed such want of feeling. Since it is the music that must be, by your express wish, the subject of this communication, I fear I will make a doleful correspondent. Pray forgive an offense that you, sweet Marquise, solicited!

I do not complain so much about the presentation of myself. I was a minor actor in the business, and, to show me as I was, it was enough to let a lyric tenor have a few unfinished phrases followed by—in your presence—some pleasant ardor. All young men sound the same. But you, Madame! In you was the occasion for a role of huge and various powers! Your teasing prevarications, your seductiveness and your knowledge of it, your majestic self-defense, your feigned sympathy with Cécile, whom you had obliged Valmont to deflower, your stern command to him to discontinue his connection with Madame de Tourvel,[3] your final magnificence in ruination: these were opportunities for music to coax, caress, and—yes!—alarm us with its knowledge of the heart. Instead, we heard a vocal part that, perhaps attempting the ambiguous, achieved only the neutral. So many phrases that simply declined with the words! And such strange thinness and nonchalance in the orchestra! Often there was nothing more than a sequence of blank, elementary chords, or a meandering line that seemed ignorant of what was occurring onstage—if anything was. For fully the first twenty minutes, one waited in a perplexed stagnation for something to happen, and in the whole opera the only moment of musical passion arrived when Valmont failed to use quite to the full the whore Emilie.

The didgeridoo . . .[4]

LETTER NO. 70,158

The Vicomte de Valmont to the Marquise de Merteuil

YOU are quite wrong, of course, about that opera. As chance would have it, I caught the PBS telecast,[5] and though I can confirm all that you say about the words, they are not the cause of your dissatisfaction, nor are they of mine. In opera, all problems are musical problems. But Danceny's shafts, too, though well aimed, hit only the outer rim of the target. He laments that this was not an opera by Tchaikovsky; I would rather say I wish it had been one by Mozart. And so, perhaps, would the composer, who has been quoted as remarking that "Mozart stole a lot of my melodies." At least that would explain why they were not present in his music.

So why do I find Mozart when I look for what this opera was not? Surely not just because Mozart was our contemporary. No, but because Mozart's music lived, as our letters lived, on that precarious edge where what has been controlled, even counterfeited, comes to be what is felt, and where what was felt is lost among the byways of masquerade. And also because such uncertainties breed the erotic, where nature is on the point of escape from, or subjection to, being tamed.

Let me add at once that Mozart is

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[3] Curiously, nothing from Madame de Tourvel has been found among these posthumous letters. It may be that persons in her present situation have not the leisure of correspondence.

[4] There is much more from the Chevalier in the same vein.

[5] This would enable us to date the Vicomte's letter to soon after the seventeenth of October, 1994, could we be sure that dates in his realm have any relevance.

not the sole custodian of the erotic in opera. The art is erotic through and through, and it astonishes me that you can have been so right about the intimacy of the stolen letter or the film closeup but failed to observe that opera, too, gives us access to the forbidden—to the voice raised in the extremity and nakedness of excitement. The voice, my dear, is our other genital organ, and one that partakes of both female and male: its dwelling is an orifice, and yet it projects.

However, for the probing of boundaries between the civil and the erotic, between order and desire, Mozart above all other composers is your man. What was needed in this opera was not Danceny's "feeling" but your "style"—though in the music, not in the words. We should have felt ourselves to be always unsure, as in Mozart, whether what we were hearing was convention or meaning. This need not have entailed Mozartean pastiche: conventions can be convened for the occasion, as witness the example of "Der Rosenkavalier," to which our composer quite evidently refers in his writing for a trio of women's voices—not to mention his intimation of you, my love, as a kind of sister to the Marschallin. He also goes a little way toward subterfuge in his use of a minuet and a saraband, and of the sound of a harpsichord in the pit. Fatally, though, these are items of sonic décor; they do not buckle the music into duplicity.

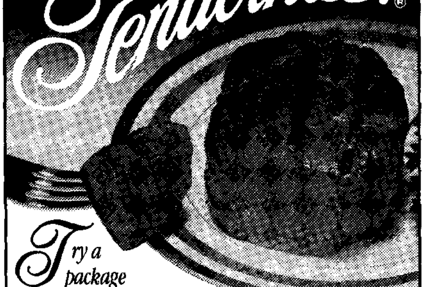
How typical of you that, in your own condemnation of the opera, you should fasten on the figure you cut in it! And how typical of Danceny that he should move to your excuse! Poor me: I had rather thought myself to be the principal character. If you ought to have been a Marschallin, with your vulnerability turned to pride and your mercy to vindictiveness, then I should have been a Don Giovanni, propelled not by desire, or even by the notion of desire, but by the drive to win. Perhaps another Mozart opera, "Così Fan Tutte," would offer at once a closer parallel and an antithesis. In that piece, a game becomes real: toying with emotions, the characters come to feel them. Whereas for us the game was already the only reality: emotions were to us a superfluity—all emotions, that is, except those we felt in the play for power. You found the pleasures of the escritoire to be more consuming and even—was this not so?—more satisfying than those of the bedchamber. And here was another problem for the opera. People so in command of themselves do not sing. We two, you and I, we should have been speaking players in a drama of singers: manipulating those poor fools, but all the time their lessers. I might have begun to sing with Madame de Tourvel, at the end. I do not know. I am beyond being aware of what I did not feel.

So, too, I fancy, the gallant gentleman playing me in the opera. Thomas Hampson—genial, warm, candid—seemed to be benignly watching over the action rather than fulfilling it. There was the release of tension one feels when Leporello has to take on the role of Don Giovanni: if the buffoon is now impersonating the villain, nothing serious can happen. The fault is, of course, in how the part is composed—or in that it is composed at all. Frederica von Stade had the other struggle, of singing you, and her effort to make something of that struggle was an opera all its own: the determination, so aptly betraying a note of harshness in her tone; her valiant attempts to make words work where the music would not. Bravo. I liked the young Australian, David Hobson, for his ingenuousness as Danceny. I liked Mary Mills for her quickness as Cécile, and I liked Renée Fleming for her passionate gravity as Madame de Tourvel. I liked the efforts of Colin Graham, the director, and Gerard Howland, the designer, to make a small budget go a long way: one knows, even here, of the financial woes of the San Francisco Opera. I liked the tireless spirit of Donald Runnicles, conducting. It was all so likable and all so . . . null.

Were we ever null, my dear? Were we ever null? Ah yes. Always. But our nullness mattered.

Hell, some wit once said, is other people. But no: Hell is ourselves, when we see ourselves being portrayed without the constant accomplishment we know those roles to exact.

I could continue, but I would fear to make this letter into a review—a genre that I know you to detest. As to the identity of the person with whom you attended the Opera, my love, did you really not penetrate my disguise? ♦



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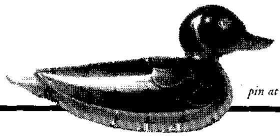

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BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

The Informers

by Bret Easton Ellis

(Knopf; $22)

"AMERICAN PSYCHO" goes west in Ellis's loosely structured fourth novel, to a Los Angeles of the early eighties, where, alas, "there is really not a lot to do." There are, once again, references to Ellis's previous works, and, since this is, after all, Los Angeles, there are also blondes, tans, cars, sunglasses, sex, violence, Betamaxes, and tumbleweeds—the last two being anomalous enough to suggest a metaphorical intent. Like Ellis's second, and least successful, novel, "The Rules of Attraction," the book is multiply narrated: one particularly lively chapter follows a sad and sadistic rock star on tour in Japan, while another, more typically, trails in the wake of a Hollywood wife on downers as she meanders from tryst to ladies' lunch to dysfunctional family dinner. There is a somewhat casual attitude toward grammar and syntax, and, rather late in the day, plotwise, there are vampires and signs of a purposive disintegrating narrative grasp on reality. In other words, "The Informers" is a Jackie Collins novel plus literary devices but minus fun—not everyone's cup of tea, to be sure, but, in its own slipshod way, true to its meta-lack of a nonpoint about the place, time, and class it concerns: emptiness is as emptiness does.

GENERAL

Brecht and Company

by John Fuegi

(Grove; $32.50)

IN his lifetime (1898-1956) Bertolt Brecht was recognized as a master, while those who suffered from his plagiarism, his financial and political opportunism, and his sexual exploitativeness recognized him as despicable. In this enormous, fascinating biography, Fuegi, an academic who founded the International Brecht Society, and who admires Brecht's theatre and poetry, puts "Brecht" in quotation marks, because research has found that most of the writing attributed to him was the work of three talented mistresses: Elisabeth Hauptmann, Margarete Steffin, and Ruth Berlau. (His misogynistic early poems were often composed with the help of young male lovers.) Fuegi started his investigations in 1965, when many people who had known his subject were still alive; their rueful reminiscences testify to Brecht's personal seductiveness. Though immensely detailed, this book is never dry; its spaciousness accommodates both places and personalities, and the double narrative—Brecht's doings and Fuegi's discoveries—is consistently compelling. And, though Fuegi regards "Brecht" as a corporate construct, he never lets us doubt the importance of the plays to contemporary drama.

Achilles in Vietnam

by Jonathan Shay

(Atheneum; $20)

IN this highly original, if stiffly written, book, Shay, a psychiatrist, compares the agonizing stories he has heard from Vietnam veterans—stories that delineate the nature of post-traumatic-stress disorder—with the behavioral patterns found among the soldiers in Homer's Iliad, especially Achilles, who goes berserk after Briseis, his prize of honor, is unjustly seized by Agamemnon, and his friend Pátroklos is killed in battle. "My claim," Shay says, "is that the Iliad can be legitimately read as a text concerning the human experience of combat." Conversely, Shay argues, Achilles' condition—his sense of betrayal, the narrowing of his moral universe, his uncontrolled rage—anticipates the psychological ravages of the Vietnam War. Shay makes a persuasive case, and it's enlightening to reconsider the Iliad in this context. His book is a cogent, painful reminder that in the broken lives of Vietnam veterans we are still paying for what was distinctly unoriginal about that war as well as for its peculiarly original evils—the contributions of our own age to an ancient form of suffering.

Capone: The Man and the Era
by Laurence Bergreen
(Simon & Schuster; $30)

AN engrossing biography, which conveys both place and period, showing exactly why this Brooklyn-born son of Neapolitan immigrants could achieve his particular eminence only in Chicago in the nineteen-twenties. Bergreen's Capone is more complex than the legendary brutal Scarface; he's a capable man whose career on the wrong side of the law parallels—or parodies—the activities of the corporate monopolists of his day. From his mentor, Johnny Torrio, a reserved and dignified racketeer, Capone derived the concept of a rationally organized criminal gang able to negotiate territorial settlements with rivals. But Capone's rivals rarely shared his vision, and so, more often than he preferred, he yielded to necessity and, like a Renaissance prince, sent in the assassins. Bergreen's research enriches his story with wonderful detail: the account of how gangsters played golf is straight from the caddie's mouth and very funny. Capone was eventually imprisoned for tax evasion in 1931; he died, of syphilis, in 1947.

Westward Whoa
by W. Hodding Carter
(Simon & Schuster; $21)

TRAVELLING by inflatable boat, by rented car, on foot, and on horseback, Carter and his sidekick, Preston Maybank, retraced the route of Lewis and Clark's historic 1804-06 expedition from the Mississippi to the Pacific. Lewis and Clark were in search of a new route west; God knows what Carter and Maybank were looking for. What they found was muddy rivers and sparkling ones, assorted pollutants, friendly travellers and drunken hooligans, and a wide variety of animal scat. Their humor, too, is frequently scatological, but amid the banter there emerges something of a lesson about the deterioration of the continent during the two centuries since Lewis and Clark's journey. The story has a simple dynamism, and once you have joined the travellers on their westward trek it is hard to bid them farewell until you have seen the Pacific. ♦

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SHOUTS AND MURMURS

AYES ONLY

BY CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

August 1, 1994
To: The President
From: Strobe Talbott, Deputy
Secretary of State
Re: Turning Around Public Perception of Haitian "Liberation"

It is imperative that we move swiftly to correct the growing public misperception that the *liberation*, as opposed to invasion, of Haiti is anything less than an *urgent national-security priority of the United States government.* In the face of national complacency about the Caribbean powder keg, we must demonstrate that Haiti represents a threat to *every American citizen.*

The following proposals ought to be immediately implemented so as to insure that public opinion is squarely behind you when Operation Daydream becomes operational and the troops hit the beaches.

1. National Security Adviser Lake should hold a strictly off-the-record meeting with the press and reveal that the government has determined that the pilot of the Cessna that crashed into the White House last week was in fact a *former member of the Tontons Macoutes*, working on behalf of General Cédras, to decapitate the U.S. leadership. Though it is admittedly unusual for a middle-class white man from suburban Maryland to be a Tonton Macoute, strange things happen in time of *war.*

Your measured response would be along the lines of: "I can't really comment on an ongoing national-security investigation. I'm just grateful that Hillary and Chelsea and Socks are safe. Meanwhile, I would stress that I do not hold the *fine Haitian people* responsible for the vile, cowardly actions of their military dictator."

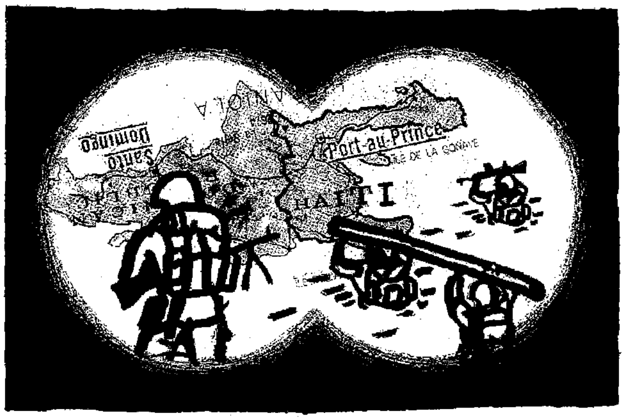
2. Director of Central Intelligence Woolsey should hold an urgent press conference to assert that "at this point we can't say for sure one way or the other" whether *Haiti has nuclear weapons capable of reaching Miami, Atlanta, and Mobile.* He should stammer, avoid eye contact, and, if possible, sweat freely. (Surely C.I.A. technical people can accomplish that much.) The briefing should be conducted against a backdrop of blown-up satellite photographs of Haiti, with a detail of the interior labelled "LASCAHOBAS HEAVY WATER FACILITY" and another labelled "PETITE RIVIÈRE DE L'ARTIBONITE ICBM SITE."

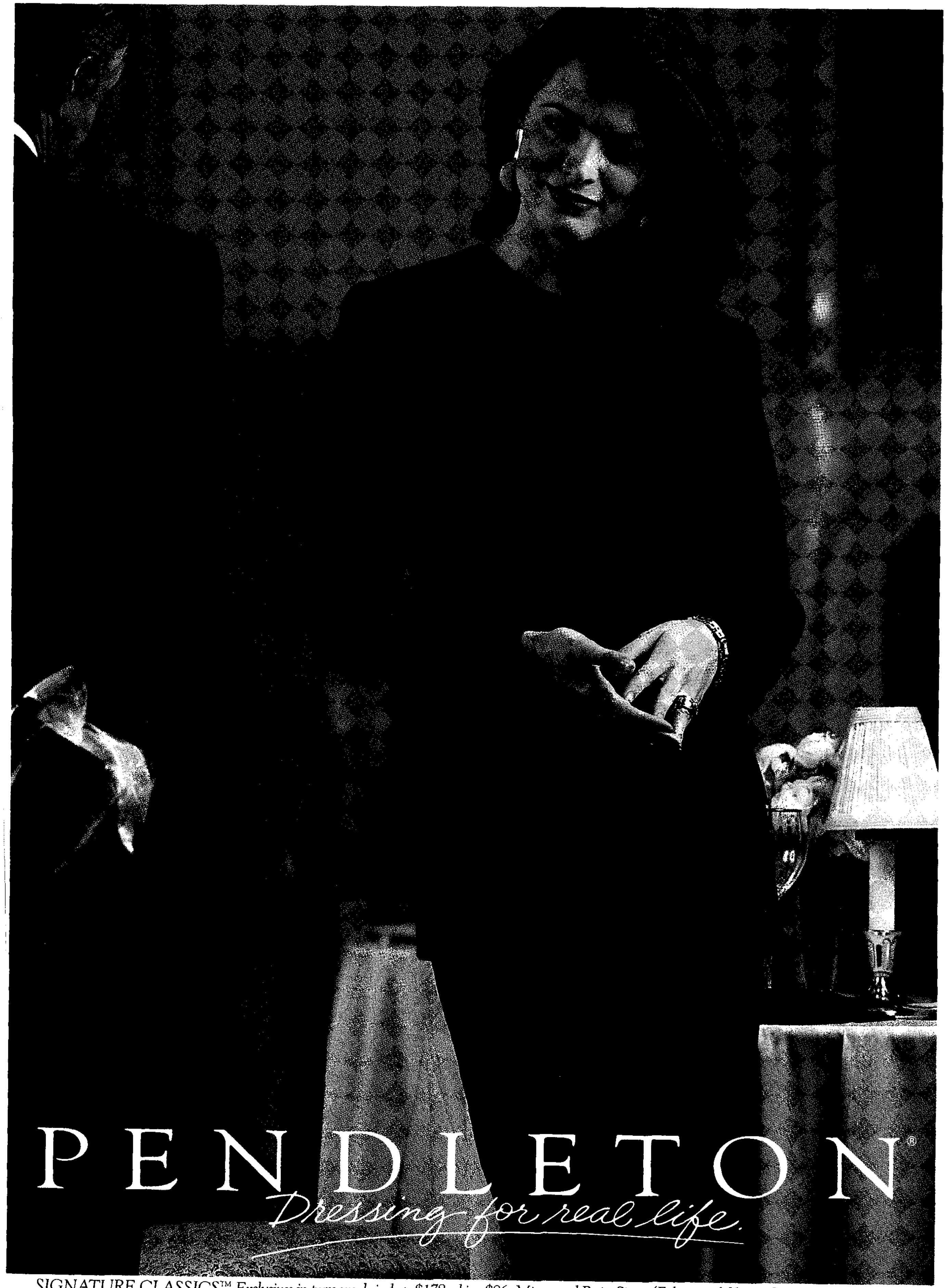
3. Secretary Christopher should publish an Op-Ed piece revealing that, based on our interrogation of Haitian detainees at Guantánamo, the tide of so-called Haitian "boat people" is in fact the vanguard of a Haitian invasion of the American mainland. SecState can assert that, despite their scruffy and half-starved appearance, these are the highly trained élite of the Haitian Special Forces—so deadly, indeed, that they don't even need conventional weapons to carry out their instructions to *sabotage vital U.S. military and civilian installations.*

4. U.N. Ambassador Albright should convene a plenary session of the Security Council and reveal the existence of a document entitled "Plan Vraiment Secret et Extraordinaire pour l'Overthrow des États-Unis et du Canada par les Dictateurs d'Haiti." The Haitian ambassador will of course denounce the document as a forgery. Let him. Ambassador Albright's position should be: *"Je suis prête à attendre votre réponse jusqu'à ce que gèle l'enfer."* ("I am prepared to wait for your reply until hell freezes over"—a nice Stevensonian echo, which will connect this crisis with the Cuban Missile Crisis, when Americans faced down another Caribbean threat to the security of the United States.)

5. American tourists who had unpleasant pre-embargo experiences in Haiti should be urged to come forward with their *horror stories* of lost luggage, stolen purses, turista, misplaced reservations, indifferent service, and beach boys urging them to buy marijuana. Your average American basically does not care one whit what happens in the Caribbean as long as it doesn't interfere with his vacation. This aspect of the plan would therefore strike at the very heart, so to speak, of America's soul, Caribbean-wise.

6. Delta Force, our most secret and élite military element, should immediately, and under cover of night, establish a third-rate medical college deep in the Haitian interior. The "students" would consist of short, young, gender-mixed, and, if possible, pimply Delta Force personnel. The Haitian military will of course attack the facility. The students, equipped with a state-of-the-art satellite telecommunications uplink, can tearfully appeal for U.S. military assistance, paving the way for thorough and enthusiastic public acclaim of your bold leadership. ♦

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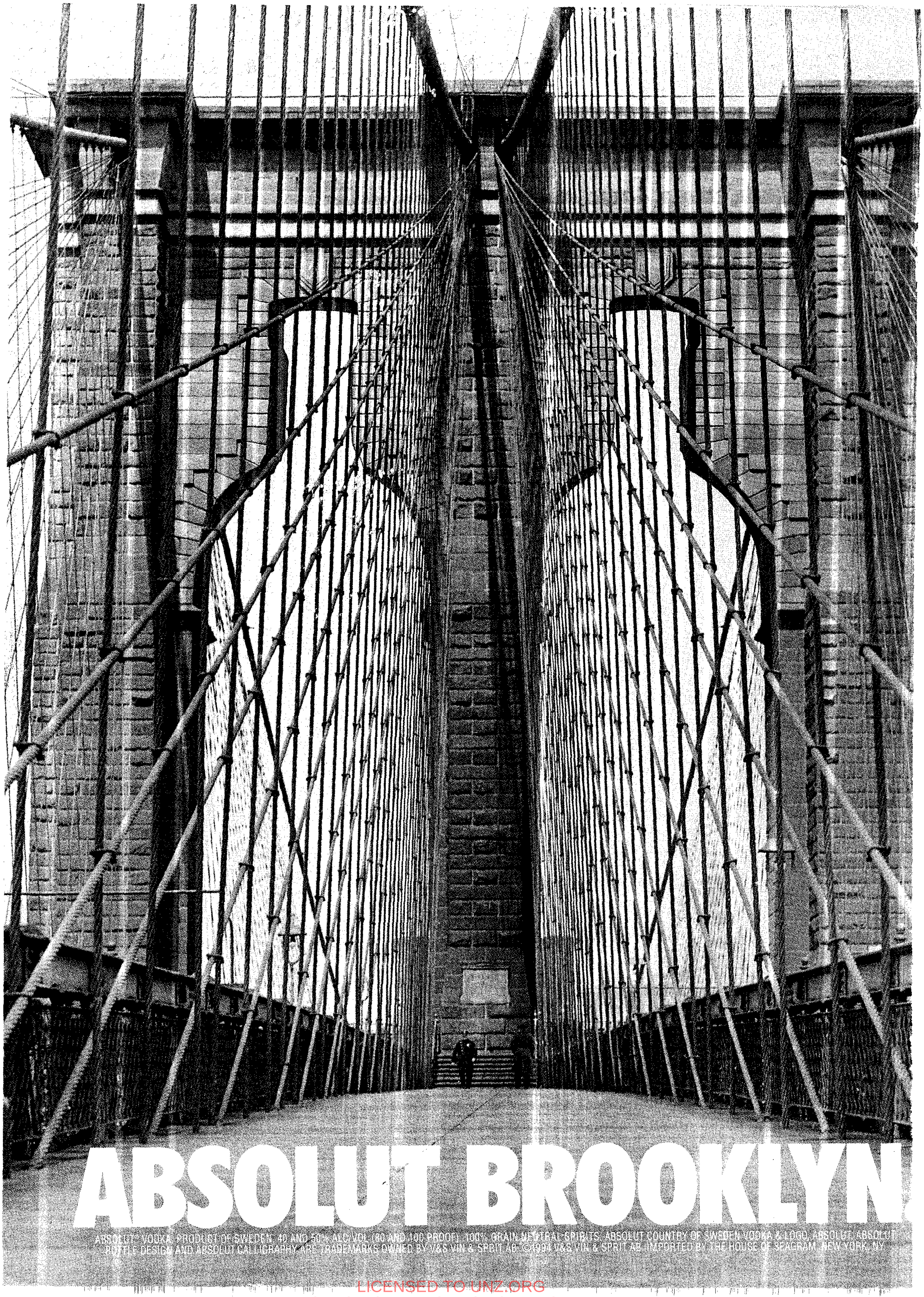

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